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IN FIFTY VOLUMES.

By JOHN WESLEY, M. A.

Late FELLOW of *Lincoln-College*, OXFORD.

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AN
EXTRACT
FROM AN
ENQUIRY
AFTER
HAPPINESS.

BY

RICHARD LUCAS, D.D.

IN THREE PARTS.



TO

TEXT R A C T

Y E N O U R Y



RICHARD LUCAS D.D.

IN THREE PARTS

AT O



T O T H E

R E A D E R.

IT has pleased GOD, that in a few Years I should finish the more pleasant and delightful Part of Life, if Sense were to be the Judge and Standard of Pleasure; being confined (I will not say condemned) by well-nigh utter Blindness to Retirement and Solitude. In this State Business (wherein I could never pretend to any great Address) gives me more Trouble than formerly; and that too without the usual Dispatch or Success: Study (which is the only Employment left me) is clogg'd with this Weight and Incumbrance, that all the Assistance I can receive from without, must be conveyed by another's Sense, not my own; which it may easily be believed are Instruments as ill fitted, and as awkwardly managed by me, as Wooden Legs and Hands by the Maimed.

BUT the Vigour and Activity of my Mind, the Health and Strength of my Body (being now in the Flower of my Age) continuing unbroken,

TO the READER.

I found that if I did not provide some Employment that might entertain it, it would weary out itself with fruitless Desires of, and vain Attempts after its wonted Objects, and so that Strength and Vivacity which should render my State more comfortable, would make it more intolerable.

BEING likewise abundantly convinced that I am not released from that Duty I owe that Body of which I am still a Member, by being cut off from a great Part of the Pleasures and Advantages of it; therefore like one that truly loves his Country, when no Way else is left him, fights for it on his Stumps; so will I, even in the Remains of a broken Body, express at least my Affection for Mankind, and breathe out my last Gasps in their Service.

I HAVE had so much Experience of the Pleasures that Prosperity can afford, that I am sufficiently capable of setting a true Value upon them, and of judging their Subserviency to true Happiness: And I am so well acquainted with Affliction, that I am sufficiently sensible, as of the Weakness of human Nature, so of the Necessity and Power of Virtue: And after all, my Mind lives now in the Body (like a Soul in a separate State) retired as from the Pleasures, so from the Troubles of the World, and is therefore the more able to pass a free and dispassionate Judgment upon both.

I SHOULD

TO the READER.

I SHOULD not think it any Crime, were I Master of such Talents, if I mingled with necessary Truths, all that Variety of Thought and Fancy which might render them as delightful as useful; the Example of GOD Himself in the great Work of the Creation would justify this Liberty, who has created as well Leaves and Flowers, as Herbs and Fruit; and in the Variety and Beauty, in the Colours and Figures of all that He has produced, appears plainly to have made Provision not only to feed the Appetite, but even the Fancies of his Creatures.



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Enquiry after Happiness.

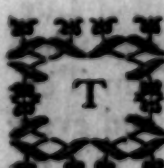
PART I.

SECT. I.

Of the Motives to this Enquiry, and of the Objections which may be formed against it.

CHAP. I.

The Importance, the Necessity of it.

 HE Desire of Happiness is the first, most powerful and most universal Principle of human Actions: This moves the Prince and Peasant, the Learned and Idiot: Revelation and Reason take this for granted; all Laws, both divine and human, proposing our Happiness as the sufficient Motive to our Obedience.

BUT

BUT all this while, though all Sorts of Religion and Government unanimously consent in the Proposal of this general End; yet so great is the Diversity (I may say Contrariety) in the Methods in which they pursue it, that it seems to imply the Discovery of Happiness, a Matter of no less Uncertainty than Importance; there being as great a Variety in the Opinions of Men about it, as in their Lives and Actions, or in the Forms of Religion and Government in the World: Since all these seem, according to the different Judgments of Men, so many different Paths which lead to it.

AND yet 'till I have fixed the Notion of Happiness, and found out what it consists in, it is impossible I should live rationally: How shall I steer the Course of my Life aright, when I know not what Port I would make? How shall my Actions tend to any wise or noble Purpose, when I have no Mark prefix'd them? 'Till then I must live *extempore*, and act at Random, I must abandon myself to Wind and Tide, to Time and Chance.

Quo me cunq; rapit tempestas, deferor hospes.

*Tost by a Storm, for my Retreat I take
Whatever Shore the unguided Bark can make.*

IN a Word, 'till I know what to aim at, Business will be but a Mechanick drudging out of Life, and Study but a vain Amusement: Whereas when all my Inclinations shall have one uniform Tendency, when every Desire of the Soul, and every Action of Life shall be a Step advancing in a direct Line towards Happiness, when the Vigour and Activity of my Mind shall not be suspended and frustrated by Uncertainties and Fluctuation, nor deluded and lost in wandering Errors and Deviations,

viations, but shall ever carry me straight forwards towards my Journey's End; then certainly all my Labours will prosper, and my Progress will be great, tho' my Motion should be but slow: Thus Plants, whose native Vigour mounts straight upwards, tho' their Bulk be less, yet their Height and Beauty is greater than theirs whose luxuriant Nourishment wastes itself in Knots, and distorted Branches.

HAVING considered this, I resolved, that I could not spend my Time better than in an Enquiry, what the Happiness of Man is, and how attainable: Every Advance towards this is an Accession to my Life and Being; and all Travail which doth not lead me on towards this End, is but so much of Life miss-spent and lost: What a Silliness were it to load my Memory with Terms and Words, with numerous Instances of Matters of Fact, to talk of unknown Seas and distant Shores, to tumble over each Page in Nature's System? What trifling Cunning to skill the gainful Mysteries of Trade? What solemn Foppery to penetrate into all the Subtleties of Government? If after all I have no Receipt for a troubled Mind, no Cure for distempered Passions; if I have no Principle to support my Mind under a sinking Fortune, or govern it in a rising one; if I have nothing to arm me against my Fears, or to disperse my Griefs; would any one think I had spent my Time well, or stocked myself with useful Knowledge?

BUT to find out what would make me happier, what would free my Mind from the Slavery of uneasy Passions, what would make it serene, steady, great and manly in all the Accidents of Life: This every Man sees at the first Blush to be a
wise,

wife, generous, and serviceable Employment of my Reason. This,

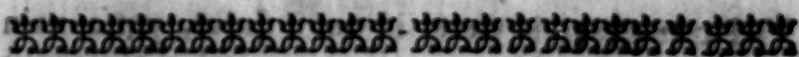
*Æque pauperibus prodest, locupletibus æque,
Æque neglectum pueris senibusq; nocebit.*

THIS occasioned St. *Augustine's* ingenious Reflections on the Polytheism of the *Romans*: When he considered that they worshipped *Felicitas*, (by which they meant that Deity that could confer Happiness upon Men) he could not but wonder why this was not the most ancient of all their Gods; or why, when this Deity was found out, they did not presently discard the other idle Multitude of superfluous and unnecessary Gods; since this alone was sufficient to supply all the Necessities, and gratify all the Desires of Mankind.

BUT though Happiness should be a Project too great, too ambitious for a poor silly Mortal; yet sure the Redress of those Evils which oppress our State and Nature, is such a Design as may well become the Meanness of Men; and therefore if I could not excuse the Presumption of this Enquiry, by pleading the innate Desire of Happiness, yet sure I might by urging the Multitude of those Evils which infect human Life, which it is not only irrational but impossible so far to yield and submit to, as not to struggle to lighten their afflicting Weight: This I confess was the first, and none of the least prevalent Arguments that engaged me: I would be, if not happy, at least not miserable, and I am neither insensible nor fearless; I know the common Portion of Man, and I cannot so far flatter myself as not to apprehend approaching Evils; nor am I naturally so hard as not to shrink under the Weight of them, and I suppose most Men are of the same Nature with me;

me; and consequently this own Consideration of human Misery, ought to effectually oblige us to this Study.

HOWEVER, let others do what they will, I will never abandon myself; I will not tamely renounce my Hopes of Happiness, what ever Calamities assault me, they shall find me ready arm'd from Head to Foot, nor shall they ever gain an easy Victory; Death itself, whenever it comes, shall find me struggling to the last for Life, Eternal Life and Happiness: Nor can I entertain so unworthy a Thought of the most perfect Being, but that He loves this Resolution wherever he meets it, and will be most ready to assist his Creatures in so just and rational an Endeavour.



C H A P. II.

Objections against this Enquiry.

BUT it is objected, *First*, Happiness is too Divine a State for Man to aspire after.

Secondly, THE utmost Happiness of this Life is so trifling that it cannot recompense our Time and Travail.

Thirdly, THERE is no Need of Study or Enquiry after Happiness; Nature and Custom being the best Guides to it.

Fourthly, THE great Variety there is in the Nature of Men, and consequently in their Happiness, demonstrates it impossible either to frame one uniform Notion of Happiness, or to prescribe any general Rules for the Attainment of it.

AND, *First*, they that pretend to be wise above the Vulgar, look upon Happiness as too Divine a State for so mean a Creature as Man to affect; it was the sinful Ambition of our First Parents to aspire to the Likeness of GOD, and what can be more truly the Prerogative of GOD than Happiness? Or what can make us more like GOD? To affect this therefore were the Folly of those Earth-born Creatures, which sacrilegiously invaded Heaven; let us rest satisfied with those easy and obvious Pleasures which best suit this imperfect State.

I CONFESS, it were, if not a sinful, yet a vain Ambition for Man to affect any other Happiness than what is suitable to his Nature; we readily grant, Happiness is a State of Pleasure, and Pleasure is the Result of the Proportion and Agreeableness of the Object to the Capacity or Appetite; so that he that aspires to a State of Happiness that infinitely exceeds his Nature, foolishly doats on Contradictions, and affects a Happiness devoid of Pleasure; or which is all one, covets a Pleasure which he cannot enjoy: But when it is remember'd that we propose no Happiness, but what the Frame of our Nature qualifies us for, and consequently the GOD of Nature design'd us; it will be easily granted that GOD does not only allow of, but direct and delight in Man's Endeavours after Happiness: Those Faculties and Capacities with which He has endow'd him, being the fairest Declaration of the Divine Will in this Point.

THERE

THERE are others of that sluggish and brutish Temper, that being unable to raise their Conception above Sense, seem to despise that Happiness the wise and religious Part of Mankind profess to seek after, and to think all the Pleasure Man can enjoy, so little, that it is scarce worth the while to take much Pains for it.

IT is true I am but Man, that is, a little Atom in the vast Bulk of Matter; and my Life is but a short Moment in an endless Stream of Time: But then I feel a strange Kind of Comprehensiveness in my Soul, it stretcheth forth itself to Times past and to come, it enjoys Things that are not seen, by Faith and Hope, and sometimes Things that are not at all, by Memory and Fancy; and tho' my Life be but a Moment, Pleasure hath its Degrees; and therefore if I can possess it in its Height and Perfection, I shall live much, tho' not long, I shall enjoy Eternity in a Moment. Nor is this mere Fancy and Romance: For when I find *Cicero* in, surely, a holy Ravishment of Soul, preferring one Day spent according to the Precepts of Virtue, before a sinful Immortality; and the Psalmist declaring almost in the same Words *One Day in thy Courts is better than a thousand*; I cannot chuse but think there are irresistible Charms in Virtue, Pleasures as ravishing as they are pure and sacred: And who then can restrain himself from the glowing Desires of, and resolute Endeavours after a Share in them? When I have read *Socrates* dying with a generous Charity and serene Hopes, and with an undisturbed Mind, easily parting with all here below; when I have read of *Simeon* waiting for, and expecting Death, as weary Labourers do the Evening-Shades; when I read *St. Paul* with humble Impatience expressing his devout Desire of Death and Dissolution; when I have seen some

(as some I have seen) sitting in Calm, and Majesty, and Triumph, as if they had attended Death as the old *Romans* once did the barbarous Gauls, in their Chairs and Robes; when I have seen Men die, not only with Content, but almost in an Extasy, and the Soul, breath'd forth not in a Groan, but an Ejaculation; I must needs say I could not chuse but wish, *That I might die the Death of the Righteous, and that my latter End might be like his.* These are Degrees of Happiness which I should judge it reasonable to purchase at any Rate, whatever there be hereafter; a smooth, contented, delightful Life, such as would not only bear, but invite Reflections on it, a chearful, lightsome Death, able to make the Living in Love with it.

BUT after all, whether this present Life be all my Portion, whether I die all of me together with my Body, or whether this Life be only the Time of our Probation and Preparation for another, and Death be nothing but the rough Passage from one Shore to another, or the Horizon that parts the Hemisphere of Darkness from that of Light, is a Question I will not now determine; it is sufficient to propose it here as a Doubt, whereof one Side or other must be true. If therefore this Life be in order to Eternity, it nearly imports me to consider my present Relation to a future State; if it be not, then this Life, call it what you please, a Span, a Dream, or a Bubble, yet is it my All, and I must make the most of it. But,

ARE not Nature and Custom the best Guides to Happiness? What needs there so much poring to find out that which Instinct leads us to? We do not see that the most learned are always the most happy Men; let such demonstrate the Truth of their Philosophy by their own Success.

As to the former Part of the Objection, were it but once truly determin'd what were to be understood by Nature, this Objection would vanish: I think our Souls within us may be justly suppos'd to constitute a Part of our Nature as well as our Bodies; and therefore I cannot be content that the Body, much less vicious Habits should usurp the Name and Authority of Nature; nor consequently can I be content to allow the mere sensual Appetites of the Body, much less the Dictates of vicious Habits, for the Laws of Nature. The Body indeed is an essential Part of our Nature, but then it must be remembered it is not the governing Part; and therefore its Instinct cannot arrogate to itself the Authority of a Law. It remains therefore that tho' the rational Soul be but a Part of our Nature, yet being the better Part, the ruling Part, its Dictates must have the Force of Laws; so that the Law of Nature will be nothing else but the Commands of right Reason. I shall be most ready to grant, that we ought to follow the Conduct of our Nature, taking it in this Sense, he indeed lives happy who follows the Conduct of that Part to which belongs the undoubted Right of Sovereignty and Dominion in Man.

As to the latter Part of this Objection, by Custom is commonly meant those Principles and Practices which are generally receiv'd in the Place we live; I have a just Veneration for whatever is the Sense of Mankind, but I think their Suffrage is not to be taken by Number, but by Weight: Nor are we to follow the Opinion or Example of the most, but of the best: Nor indeed is it possible to understand what is the Sense of Mankind in this Point; for we have Custom against Custom, Nation against Nation, and Religion against Religion.

It ought farther to be considered, that Principles taken upon Trust have seldom an equal Influence upon us, with those which we take upon strict Examination and mature Deliberation; that Men will easily be tempted to desert those for which they have no better Authority than the Vote of a Multitude: Nor can any Thing tend more to the Disparagement of any Persuasion than this, that it is not the Result of our Judgment, but our Fortune: And so I take it to be a Credit to the Christian Religion, that it did not force Assent, but gain it by irresistible Arguments; that it is so far from shunning the Trial of impartial Philosophy, that it did always invite Men to a sober Examination of its Evidence; and commanded its Disciples, *Be ready to give an Answer to every Man that asketh you a Reason of the Hope that is in you.*

Lastly, To trust to others who themselves with like Rashness trust to others in the Matter of highest Moment, seems to be inconsistent with common Prudence, with the very Constitution of a rational Nature: For what Use can Reason be of, if I slight its Service in so important an Affair as this?

YET it is true, Temper, Fortune and Education have so great a Share in the Happiness or Misery of some Kind of Men; that I must not yet dismiss this Objection 'till I have taken a little Notice of such for whose Defence it was at first found out: These are,

First, THE stupid and brutish Part of Mankind, these seem to have met with Happiness whilst they seek it not: Their Fancies flat, their Prospect short, and their Desires few and easy, and consequently if their Pleasures be not raised, neither are their Troubles deep; Stupidity in them out does
Philosophy

Philosophy in others, and Want of Sense makes them laugh more loudly, live more securely, and die more unconcernedly than the thoughtfullest of Men can.

WERE the Incapacity of these Men great enough to justify their Contempt of Reason and Religion, I should almost be tempted to call them happy: But at the same Moment I should despise their Happiness; for I cannot call those happy, whose Souls are too sluggish and drowsy to understand or reflect upon their Happiness: Or if I must call this Happiness, it is the Happiness of a Beast, not of a Man: With me to live is somewhat greater than to feed and rest, and to be happy must be much more than to live. The Extreme to these are,

Secondly, THE gay, the gaudy, the modish Part of Mankind; these too pretend to Happiness: And if their Pretence be well founded, their Way to Happiness is a more ready, plain, and compendious one, than any that ever was, or ever will be discovered.

BUT alas, Shortness of Sight cannot pass with me for Wit, nor an unthinking Confidence for Wisdom; I have seen most of those Dreams the World can present the gayest Fancy with, and upon Trial, I have perhaps found something that could divert my Fancy, nothing that could satisfy a rational Soul. I will not here examine what is the Employment, what the Pleasure proper to a rational Being: Nor will I now go about to shew, that *that* Mind can enjoy no sober or lasting Peace, much less Pleasure, which is engaged in such a Method of Life as it cannot rationally justify to itself; both which Considerations would be plain Refutations of this gay Objection: It is enough in this Place

Place to say that this Sort of Life is repugnant to those Principles which Religion reveals, and which are backed by all the Authority which the unanimous Approbation of the wisest and best Part of Mankind can give. It behoves us therefore not to abandon ourselves to this Kind of Life, 'till we have narrowly tried these Principles; for if they should prove true, then will this sensual, careless Life betrays us to a miserable Eternity: And tho' they should be false, yet 'till we are upon rational Grounds convinced that they are so, we have little Reason to commit our Happiness to so great a Hazard.

It remains notwithstanding all these Objections, that it behoves every Man to pursue his Happiness by a rational Enquiry after it, neither undervaluing human Nature or its Happiness, nor giving up himself to the Guidance of the brutish and blind Part of him, but seriously and thoroughly to examine whatever End be proposed to him as his Happiness, or whatever Method be proposed to him as the Way to it: But when we have blown off these Objections, there are others that seem by a fairer Shew of Reason to deter us from it by the Difficulty and Unsuccessfulness of the Attempt.

HAPPINESS, say they, is like *Proteus* in the Poet, it puts on so many different Forms and Shapes, that it seems impossible to circumscribe it within general Rules, or to represent it under any one fixt Notion; it deserves to be examined, what Weight or Truth there is in the vulgar Notion of Happiness, that for a Man to be happy is nothing else but to live according to his Fancy: And it seems no less absurd to invite every Man to the same Heaven, or gratify every Humour by the same Kind

Kind of Happiness, than to entertain all Appetites with one and the same Dish.

BUT in that great Variety of Complexion, Feature, Shape and Motion, and in that great Diversity of Endowments which we behold in Men, there is yet one common Nature wherein they all agree, whereby they are constituted Creatures of the same Species; just such accidental Varieties may the Happiness of Man be capable of, and yet the Life and Being of it may be one and the same, and consequently may be comprehended under general Rules. And if this Answer were not sufficient, it would not be absurd to say, that Happiness like Beauty may put on various Dresses, and yet be still charming and delightful in each; or that this Bread, like that of Heaven (for so the Rabbins tell us of *Manna*) has that in it which gratifies every Palate; there are Blessings, which take with every Appetite, and are universally welcomed to all the Sons of Men. Or I may truly say, that Happiness must not only be prepared and fitted for Man, but Man for his Happiness; he must become a rational Creature ere he can enjoy a rational Pleasure: It is from this Want of Preparation that Diversity of Opinions concerning Happiness springs.

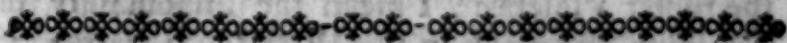
BUT there is no Reason why we should take up with these Answers: We may now boldly say, the Difficulties that former Ages met with, are of no Force to deter us; we can now free ourselves from the distracting Terrors of an invisible Power without banishing Him out of that World which Himself created; we can now prove a Judgment to come without the Assistance of poetic Dreams; and the Existence of Souls after Death, without their Pre-existence before our Birth: To be short,
we

we have now Revelation for our Rule, and every good Man a divine Spirit for his Guide ; nay, every Man, if he be sincere, in such Enquiries as these. *If any of you lack Wisdom, let him ask it of GOD, who giveth to all Men liberally, and upbraideth not ; and it shall be given him.* So that now we may rationally conclude, that fatal Ignorance or fatal Error in this Point must be imputed either to a sottish Contempt of that Knowledge we are most nearly concerned in, and the Means conducing to it, or to an obstinate Resistance of that Conviction which GOD endeavours to beget in us by his Word and his Spirit, or at least to the Want of that just Consideration we ought to allow to revealed Truths, or of that necessary Preparation which fits us for Divine Assistance, and enables us to understand the Divine Will ; and for this Reason the Dissensions and sharp Contentions of Christians ought to be no Prejudice to the Authority or Perspicuity of Revelation, or to the Assertion of the Spirit's Conduct and Assistance : For besides that Unity of Faith is an Unity of Fundamentals not of Fancies, it must be confessed that our Sects and Divisions have their Rise and Propagation from these and such like Causes ; Mens Tempers and Complexions, and Educations, and Interests and Passions give a Bias to their Judgments, and a Tincture to their Opinions : The Errors of some are the Dreams of drowsy Carelessness ; of others, the Wandrings of a wanton Confidence ; of others the crooked Windings of designing Interest, and so on : For it may with much Truth be affirmed, that all erroneous Philosophy in Matters necessary and fundamental, is the Result of some unworthy Lust and Passion.

LET us not therefore so far undervalue human Nature, or dishonour the Author of it, as once to fancy that Happiness is too great for us, or we too little

little for it; or that GOD should disallow, as a sacrilegious Ambition, the most rational Attempts of a rational Creature: Since we seek no other Happiness than what the Frame, and the GOD of Nature, appears plainly to design us to; the Greatness of which nothing can so well express as the Transports and Raptures of happy Men.

BUT let us not think this Happiness so easy a Purchase, that it will run into the Lap of the Sluggish. No, no, nothing but industrious Reason, pure and vigorous Philosophy, can ever attain it: The Sluggard or the Wanton, the Fool and Vain, may have some Fits of Ease and Mirth; only the Rational, only the Philosopher can possess true and lasting Happiness: Nor let the endless Quarrels, the numerous Contentions of vain and proud Pretenders, discourage us from following the Conduct of Reason and Revelation; these are the Contentions of Lust, not Philosophy. Truth and Happiness inhabit a Palace, into which none can enter but humble, sincere and constant Lovers.





S E C T. II.

Of the Attainableness of Happiness in this Life.

C H A P. I.

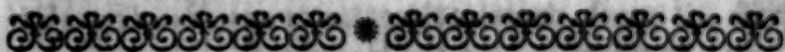
The Notion of Happiness stated; granted imperfect, compared to that of another Life, yet in itself considerable and desirable.

HAVING removed such Discouragements as were less considerable, I come now to examine that which attacks my Design with the rudest Violence; I mean the Impossibility of obtaining Happiness in this World. It is true, if our Endeavours after Happiness here, could succeed no further than to secure it to us hereafter, none could deny them reasonable upon this sole Account: Yet because this Persuasion would blunt the Force of one of the most powerful Motives to Religion, which is, *That its Ways are Ways of Pleasantsness, and all its Paths Peace*, and consequently very much abate our Vigilance and Industry in Pursuit of it; I judge it indispensibly necessary to enter into a full Discussion of this Point. In managing which I will, *First*, Assert
the

the Possibility of obtaining Happiness, by plain, and as I think, unanswerable Arguments: And *Secondly*, I will endeavour to give full Satisfaction to all Objections to the contrary. But, before I do either of these, to obviate Mistakes, it is fit I should explain my Notion of the Happiness I propose; I must therefore acquaint my Reader, that I do not promise him the Happiness of Angels, but of Men; and that I do not understand Happiness in this Proposition of that which is every Way perfect and absolute, to which Fancy itself can add nothing, but of that which is like our Nature, incomplete and imperfect, speaking comparatively, and yet truly great and excellent too.

I AM content to call a Building beautiful, tho' there be Something in it which doth not answer the Test of the strictest Art; I am content to call it Day, though flitting Clouds and Showers do now and then obscure the Light; so can I not chuse but call him righteous, whose Life is bright and exemplary, though not utterly void of Blemishes: And so I am content to think him a happy Man, not who is utterly exempt from all Disturbances in Mind or Body; not who lives in constant Extasy, but him whose Pleasures are more and greater than his Troubles; one whose Enjoyments tho' they do not transport, do satisfy him; one whose Serenity and Calm of Mind, though it may suffer Interruptions, suffers but few and slight ones. Now as we are not to lay aside any Advice of being virtuous, because we cannot arrive at the Height of Angels; so neither are we to cast off all Thoughts of Happiness, because we cannot equal theirs: For if we are happy in such a Degree as this inferior State will permit; if we can free ourselves from those Miseries which involve the foolish and vicious Part of Mankind, if we can possess ourselves

of those humble Joys that human Nature is here capable of, it will be worth all the Time and Travail we can spend upon the Design : And that we may advance thus far, the following Considerations will, I think, render it more than probable.



C H A P. II.

The Possibility of attaining Happiness, asserted.

I. **I**T cannot be denied but that some Men are more happy than others : Who will deny *Titus* to have been more happy than *Nero* ? *Titus*, whose Government of the *Roman* People was not more mild and gentle than the impartial Reflections of his Conscience upon himself and Actions ? *Nero*, that guilty Wretch, whose Conscience was no less a Plague to him than he to *Rome* ? Who will compare the pleasant Retirements, the modest Contentments, the regular and virtuous Enjoyments of *Atticus*, with the fatal Luxuries of *Catiline*, or the proud Cruelties of *Sylla* and *Marius* ? What then ? Shall we attribute no Share of Happiness or Misery to the Virtues or the Vices of the one or the other ; or no Part of their Virtues or Vices to themselves, but to I know not what fatal and irresistible Causes ? If we assert the former, we contradict unquestionable Matters of Fact ; if the latter, we rob the Virtuous of that which rendered them beloved in their Lives, and ever since has preserved their Memories sacred and honourable ; and we acquit those from all Blame or Guilt, which the Laws of their own Country, and the common Sense of Mankind have ever

ever condemned and detested. What gross and monstrous Absurdities are these? Shall we now, after the Improvement of so many Ages, dispute whether Vice or Virtue be the better Guide of human Actions, or the more serviceable to human Life? Shall Sloth and Luxury be thought to conduce as much to the Prosperity of our Lives, as Industry and frugal Temperance? Shall Ambition, Pride and Choler be now judged as instrumental to promote or preserve the Peace of our Minds and States, as Modesty, Meekness and Charity? Or if this be too daring a Defiance to Sense and Experience, shall we contend that the Slothful and Luxurious, the Unjust and Cruel, are as blameless and innocent, nay, if we will extend Principles to their just Consequence, as commendable and worthy of Praise as the Industrious and Temperate, the Meek and Gentle, the Just and Charitable? For this must inevitably follow, if neither Mens Virtues nor Vices be in any Degree to be ascribed to themselves. Wretched and desperate is that Shift that equals the Just and Unjust, the Industrious and Sluggard! Wretched the Shift that equals the Tyrant and most gracious Prince, the loyallest Subject and the Traytor, the faithful Friend and the perfidious Flatterer! And all this we must be driven to, or else, as we cannot deny that some are happier than others, so we must not deny that the Happiness of one, or Misery of the other, is owing in some Measure at least to their Virtues and Vices, and these to themselves. And if this be true, it is evident we may be happy if we will; and though we may not equal the most happy, (for I will not exclude Temper, Education, Fortune, from all Share in Mens Misery or Happiness) yet since every Degree of Happiness is truly valuable, let us with all our Might endeavour to be as happy as we can.

*Nec quia desperes inviæli membra Glyconis,
Nodosa Corpus noli prohibere Cbiragra:
Est quiddam prodire tenuis ———*

2. IT is a great Absurdity to confound or equal Virtue and Vice; but it is not the greatest they commit, who deny the Possibility of attaining Happiness; for he that banishes Happiness out of the World, does at the same Time banish Good and Evil out of it too: For Good being nothing else but the Subserviency of some Things to our true Interest, and Evil the Tendency of others to our Trouble and Injury; it must needs follow, if there be Good and Evil in the World, that he who has a greater Share of Good than Evil, is a happy Man; and he that denieth Good and Evil, may with as plausible a Confidence deny all human Passions, and assert that there is neither Love nor Hatred, neither Joy, nor Grief, nor Hope, nor Fear, nor Pity, nor Envy; for Good or Evil are the Objects or Causes of all these. I may then, I think, take it for granted, that no Man will say, there is no such Thing as Good or Evil in the World; and consequently all Men must be obliged to acknowledge such a State as Happiness in the World too, unless they will affirm one of these three Things; either, *First*, That Evil grows up every where in thick Crops; Good thin scatter'd, and rarely to be found: That consequently there are none whose Share of Evil doth not infinitely out-weigh that of Good. Or, *Secondly*, That Evil hath so much of Venom and Malignity in it, that a little Evil contributes more to our Misery, than a great deal of Good can to our Happiness; so ripe and full-grown is Evil, so lank, under-grown, and every Way imperfect is Good. Or, *Thirdly*, That we ourselves can contribute nothing to that Good or Evil which is our Portion; it is the Product, not of Reason

Reason or Industry, but of Time or Chance, or of some other Principle which is not in our Power. All these deserve to be weigh'd, not only because the Examination of them will tend to chear and encourage the Minds of Men, and to render the great Creator and Governor of the World more dear and venerable to us; but also, because it will be of some Use and Service to the whole Enquiry.

First, THEREFORE let us examine what Truth there is in that Fancy which supposes the Weight and Number of Evils in the World infinitely to exceed that of good Things. I know it is natural to some to blaspheme GOD and the King, to quarrel with and reproach Providence, and their Government; while loaded with good Things, they stretch themselves on silken Couches, under Roofs of Cedar, and loll at Ease in their gilt Coaches; and yet at the same Time the honest Countryman, who with Security, tho' much Drudgery, plows, and sows, and reaps a few Acres, eats his plain Meals with Chearfulness, sleeps without Disturbance, blesses GOD, and magnifies the Goodness of his Prince. The Contentment of the one is an evident Proof of GOD's Bounty and Goodness, whose Provision doth far exceed the Necessities of his Creatures; the Discontent of the other can be no Disparagement to it, since He has dealt liberally with them, though they enjoy not what they possess.

WE are not therefore to judge of the World by the Clamours and Invectives of such as are always mutinous and dissatisfied, but by the Suffrages of those humble, modest and grateful Souls, who know how to value the Favours of Heaven, who do not mar every Blessing by Peevishness, or Envy, or Pride, or Wantonness, but can weigh their Enjoyments,

ments, their Hopes and their Merits in just and equal Ballances; and discerning how much the one exceeds the other, chearfully praise the World's Author and Governor. If this Controversy were to be determined by such, we should find these even under uneasy and tyrannical Governments, and in the more barren and niggardly Countries, confuting this Objection by their Chearfulness and Contentment,

BUT let us decide the Controversy, not by Votes but Reasons; let us consider the State and Nature of the World: Is there one in a thousand who is left utterly unfurnish'd of all Means of wise and wholesome Instruction, which is the Good of the Soul of Man? Or is there one in a thousand maim'd and defective in the Powers and Faculties of the Soul, or Senses and Members of the Body? Is there one in a thousand, that cannot by Industry or Virtue provide himself a comfortable Subsistence? Survey the World, examine and consider Man, and then tell me whether there be any Room for those Reproaches and spiteful Reflections, by which some Men have so outraged Nature and Providence? *Philo Judæus* tells us a Rabbinical Story to this Purpose, "That when GOD had created the World, He demanded of a Prophet, *Whether he saw any Thing wanting to compleat the glorious Work?* Who told Him, *Nothing but an intelligent Being to praise the wise and gracious Architect.* GOD approving the Advice, created Man."

THE *Hebrew* Philosophers (it seems) thought the World exactly perfect, such a Work as might bespeak GOD the Author of it: And no Wonder, for they were inspired by *Moses*, who brings in GOD reflecting upon his own Creation, thus; *And GOD saw every Thing that He had made, and behold it*

it was very good. If we look up to the Heavens, such is the Beauty of those Bodies, so uniform and regular their Motions, so exactly are they disposed both for Ornaments and Service, that the Speculation exalts the Mind, and insensibly raises it above the Body; nay, it has tempted some to think every Star moved and acted by some understanding Spirit. If we look upon the Earth, so wonderful is the Variety, so inconceivable the Plenty of it, that it is not only sufficient for the Needs and Desires of the Sober and Temperate, but even for the Luxury and Wantonness of the Fanciful and Intemperate: Every Place almost is a Paradise, there is no Country almost which cannot afford us *Tempe*, or *Campania*, *Opus gaudentis Naturæ*, a Work which Nature seems to have created when in the gayest and the kindest Humour.

LET us now consider Man, and we shall find with the Psalmist, *that he is wonderfully made; he is but a little lower than the Angels; he is crown'd with Glory and Honour, and all the Creatures are put under his Feet, all the Fowls of the Air, and all the Beasts of the Field.* How infinitely wise as well as kind does GOD appear in his Contrivance? So modest are his Appetites, that a small Portion of Nature's Good is a full Meal, or Feast; and yet so various, that there is nothing in all the Provision, in all the Joys of Nature, which he is not capable of tasting and enjoying. If we regard the Mind of Man, it is capable of a most surprizing Satisfaction in the Contemplation of the hidden Powers, the secret Laws and Operations of Nature; nay, it rises higher, it passes the Bounds of mechanick Nature, it entertains itself with moral Perfections, and the spiritual Excellencies of an invisible World, and gazes on those Charms and Glories which are not subject to the bodily Eye: *Vultus nimis lubricos aspici:*

aspici: Such is the Nature of the Soul, that when it pleases it can retire within itself, withdraw from Sense, and be secure and happy in its own Strength and Wealth, *Ipsa suis pollens opibus*: And when it pleases it can walk forth like *Dinah* to see the Daughters of the Land, those Beauties that Sense presents it with; and that too (if guarded by awful Virtue) without the Danger of a Rape. To say all of it in a Word, it is capable of a Share in all the Good, and not necessarily subject to any of the Evil of this World.

——— *Fatis avolsa voluntas.*

*There are no Fates that can controul
The sovereign Freedom of the Soul.*

IF this be a true Account of Man, and the State of the World which he inhabits; if the one be fill'd with all Things necessary and delightful, and the other be endow'd with all those Capacities that fit him to enjoy them; nay, if his Soul can raise itself above the Pleasures, and exempt-itself from the Changes and Revolutions of it: Nothing is more manifest, than that the Evil in Life cannot be greater than the Good, unless it be owing to ourselves.

AND to leave this Matter beyond Dispute, no Man pretending to receive Revelation, should admit the contrary Opinion; for no Texts of Divine Writ are more plain than those which proclaim to us GOD's Love of Mankind; *That He doth not afflict or grieve willingly the Children of Men*: That the Book of Creation and Providence is writ all over with the legible Characters of Love; so legible that it renders the Idolatry and Wickedness of the *Gentiles* inexcusable: And finally, that *He*
gives

gives us richly all Things to enjoy; where the Apostle excellently expresses at once the Bounty and Design of GOD: His Bounty, in that He gives us all Things richly; his Design, not to enkindle, and then de-lude our Desires, but on Purpose to be enjoy'd by us. So then the Christian cannot believe the Evils to outweigh the Goods of Life, without contradicting Revelation; nor the Atheist or Epicurean, as shall appear from what follows, without contradicting himself.

IF Nature has contriv'd the World so ill, if it has scatter'd good Things with such a sparing Hand, whence are all those Transports and Extasies we meet with amongst these Men? What is the Ground? What is the Matter of them? Whence so rich a Crop of sensual Pleasures? Whence so much Dotage on, and Fondness for the World we so complain of? Whence are the Charms and irresistible Temptations which the Generality of Mankind is vanquish'd by? Whence is it that Men are so willing to set up their Rest on this Side *Consent*?

AGAIN, If Nature has been such a Step-mother to Man, if it has frowardly design'd him little else but Mischief: Whence that Sagacity and Penetration of Mind, searching with Delight into all the Retirements of Nature? Whence that comprehensive and almost immense Capacity of Pleasure? Whence that Strength, and Greatness of Soul, enabling not only to confront, but to despise Evils, and to be happy in Despite of them? These are Advantages so incomparably great and good, that no Evils can be ballanced against them: And it is evident that no Writings, were ever more stuffed with boasting Accounts of the Nature of Man, than those of the Epicureans. And thus, from all put together, whether we consult the Nature and State of the
World

World and Man, the Testimony of Revelation or Reason, the Suffrages of the good-humour'd and grateful Part of Mankind, or the Confessions of the voluptuous and atheistical, it is evident that Good does out-weigh Evil in the Design of God or Nature. But have I not myself, in the Beginning of this Treatise, acknowledg'd the Weight and Number of Evils great? Yes, but Evils not of God's Creation, but our own: For the Truth of the whole is, *ταράσσει τὸς ἀνθρώπους, ὃ τὰ πρᾶγματα, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τῶν πρᾶσμάτων ὀγκοῦντα*. Not Things themselves, but the Shades and Fantasm, wanton, superstitious, or froward Minds raise about them, disturb the Quiet and Repose of Man. So then, if we ourselves do not multiply the Number of our Evils, our Share of Good in Life may be much greater than our Share of Evil; and if we be not accessary to our own Misery, we may be happy, unless,

Secondly, EVIL hath so much of Venom and Malignity in it, that a little Evil contributes more to our Misery than a great deal of Good can to our Happiness. We may judge of the Force and Energy of Good and Evil, either by that Influence they generally have, or that they ought to have upon the State of Mankind. If we consider what Impressions they ought to make upon Men, the Question will come to a speedy and happy Issue; for then we must either reckon nothing an Evil but a moral One, that is, Sin and Vice; or at least we must acknowledge that the Venom and Malignity of other Evils is not comparable to that of moral Ones. This latter Opinion is an unquestionable Truth: For who will not make a wide Difference between a Misfortune and a Crime, between an Affliction and a Punishment, between those Inconveniencies, which we suffer as guilty Criminals, and those we suffer as unfortunate Innocents, or afflicted Saints? For notwithstanding the Evils or

Pains should be in the Matter of them the same, yet there it a vast Difference in the Suffering; the one make Man much more miserable than the other; for our Misfortunes only reach the Body, not the Mind: But when we suffer for our Crimes, the whole Man suffers, the Soul as well as the Body: Misfortunes, when the Storm is pass'd, leave no deform'd Ruins, no Wounds, no Scars behind them; but our Crimes leave Stains and Guilt behind, which haunt the Mind with perpetual Horror. From this Distinction of the Nature and Effect of Evils, we may infer this comfortable Conclusion, that nothing can make Man wholly, truly miserable, but himself; nothing can oppress him by the Weight of moral Evils, but his own Choice, for nothing can compel or necessitate him to be wicked; the Wounds of natural Evils (so I will call all the rest distinct from moral) are faint and slight; the Mind of Man ought not to suffer itself to be too deeply and sensibly affected by them. It is the Work of Reason and Religion to fortify the Mind against the Impressions of these Evils: And that Mind that is furnish'd with true Notions of Things with a rational and solid Faith, with steady and well-grounded Hopes, may bear the impetuous Shock of all these Waves and Storms calm and unmov'd: Nay, I may boldly affirm, not only that Virtue checks and controuls these Evils, blunts their Edge, and abates their Force; but, what is more, that their own Force is weak and contemptible, unless our own Vices be combin'd and confederated against us. Our Pride must aid our Enemy to render his affront provoking; our Covetousness and Ambition must assist Fortune to render it destructive to our Tranquility. Falshood under a Disguise of Friendship could never have abus'd our Confidence, by betraying our Infirmities, or forsaking us in Affliction, had not our own Folly and Self-conceit first betray'd us, exposing us a naked Prey to Flattery and

and Treachery. The Storm that snatcheth away a Relation or a Friend, could never overthrow me, if I stood upon my own Bottom, if I were not guilty of one of the greatest Weaknesses, of placing my Happiness in any Thing out of my own Power, and so making myself dependent upon another Man's Fancy or Fortune. Finally, Death itself must derive its Terrors from the mournful Solemnities we dress it in, or else it would prove but a very inconsiderable Evil, or none at all. Thus it is evident, That if we distinguish Evils into natural and moral, we shall have little Reason to think the Influence of Evil so malignant and deadly, since it is in our own Power to avoid moral Evils; and natural ones strike one but half Way; they wound not the Soul that is arm'd and guarded with Reason and Religion.

I THINK it is now sufficiently evident, that natural Evils are not of that mighty Efficacy, that it should be thought a little Evil doth more contribute to our Misery, than a great deal of Good can to our Happiness: It is apparent how slight the Impressions are which they ought to make upon us. It will now be Time to consider what Impressions they do generally make upon us, what their real Effect commonly is. It is true there are some that mix Heaven and Earth upon every slight Occasion, that will receive Good but no Evil at the Hand of God, most insensible of Blessing, but extremely sensible of any Evil: But this speaks not the Nature of the Evil, but of the Man; it speaks Him ungrateful, but not the Evil intolerable. Nor is human Nature to be measured by the Humour of a few, but by the Sense and Temper of the Generality; amongst whom it is easy to observe, how Instinct teaches us to elude the Stroke and Force of Evil: Nature opens its Arms, and enlarges itself to receive Good, and all the Powers

Powers of the Mind greedily strive to share in it, but it contracts and Shrinks, retires and stands upon its Defence at the Approach of Evil: It is apt to flatter itself, and apt to Hope, apt to lessen Evil, and magnify Good; apt to put off the Thoughts of approaching Trouble and to anticipate its Pleasures; it is full of great Designs and gaudy Projects, and easy prone to delight itself with airy, and imaginary Schemes of Good: This and much more is Evident in a Thousand daily Instances of Human Life, by which it is plain, Nature in the Contrivance of Man kindly design'd to fit and dispose him for Happiness by giving him such Inclinations as might serve to lessen the Evil, to increase the Good, to supply the Defects of this imperfect State. Is it not manifest, that whereas Evil looks less to us, Good looks bigger at a Distance? We are willing to help Fortune, and call in the Aids of Fancy to adorn and enrich her Gifts. Nor is it easy to Defeat Man of this Humour; he Dreams of a bottomless Abyss in every Good, in every Pleasure; and notwithstanding the daily Confutations of Experience, he still desires to repeat his Enjoyments again, as if he still hoped to find some new untasted Sweet, some Pleasure undiscover'd before. How apt are we to flatter ourselves, and willing to be flatter'd! Every Man represents himself and State under the fairest Idea that he can possibly frame of it, and turns away his Eye and Thought from every Thing that may offend him: Beauty, Strength, Health, Understanding, Wisdom, Reputation, Power, Wealth, and whatsoever future Good he can form but a slender Pretension to, make up the gay Idea; nay, and even long life and undisturb'd Security, are there drawn as two Pillars to support the Building, the daring but kind Confidence of Man, that makes himself the Master of Fate and Fortune! If you should mark

this Tablet with ever so curious an Eye, you would not be able to discover either Deformity or Folly, or Dishonour, or Poverty, or Disease, or Death: For these, Man, kind to himself, banishes far from his Thoughts. Nay, so easy to be impos'd upon are Men, that they make even those Things which are the Trophies of Death, and the Monuments of Man's Frailty and Vanity, minister to them some Comforts against Mortality; they divert and entertain themselves with the Mourning and Pomp of their Obsequies, with Blacks and Tombs, with the dying Echo's of surviving Reputation, and with the Grandure and Felicity of their Posterity; as if they fondly persuaded themselves they should be concern'd in all these Things. And if this kind, as well as obstinate Hope do in some Measure break the Force of the greatest Evil, that is Death, we cannot but expect that it should be highly serviceable to Man in moving him to despise, or enabling him to vanquish less Evils: I examin'd not what is here the Office of Philosophy, or the Work of Virtue; I have barely represented the Inclinations of Man, only that you may see that he is not such a defenceless, shiftless Creature but that his Reason dares confront, and can vanquish Evils in open Battle, and by downright Force, and his Instinct elude them by various Arts. It doth therefore manifestly appear, that as the Number of Evils is not greater than that of Goods, so neither is the Vigour and Energy of the one so much greater than that of the other, that a little Evil should outweigh a great deal of Good, that a little Evil should contribute more to a Man's Misery than a great deal of Good to his Happiness. There remains nothing further to be examin'd, but,

Thirdly, THAT Fancy which ascribes Man's Portion of Good and Evil to Time or Chance, to
any

any Thing but to himself: And he that can with Confidence affirm this, may with as good Grace assert, that there is neither Wisdom nor Folly in the World; for if there be, this Imagination must soon vanish, since Wisdom is nothing else but the Choice of true Good, and Rejection of Evil, the Pursuit of our true Happiness, by the most rational Means, and a declining all those Things that are repugnant to it. And those Success do, not always attend Wisdom and Virtue, yet you shall never persuade any but mad Men or Fools, that it is in vain to be Virtuous, or irrational to be Wise. *Solomon* has indeed observ'd, *That the Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong, neither yet Bread to the wise, nor Riches to Men of Understanding, nor Favour to Men of Skill*: But notwithstanding, I must ever think with him, that *Wisdom excels Folly, as much as Light doth Darkness*; not only because more delightful in itself, but also because it is the happiest Guide of human Life, blest generally with Success; Success in Things necessary, not superfluous: For I cannot see how it can be any Disparagement to Providence to turn that Plenty another Way, which would not like soft distilling Rains and Dew, cherish, refresh and increase the tender Plants. Wisdom and Virtue, but like a Flood wash away the Earth from their Roots, and either utterly extirpate or leave them oppress'd and buried in Rubbish. If this were not true, if the Experience as well as Reason of Mankind did not confirm it, Men would not serve Apprentisships to Trades, study Arts or Sciences, strive with Toil and Hazard to make their Point, but Lazily and securely stay 'till Fortune ran in golden Showers into their Laps.

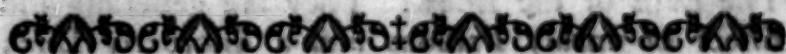
By a Recapitulation of all that has been hitherto discours'd, it may easily appear how far I have

advanc'd in the Proof of that Assertion that Happiness may be attain'd in this World. I have shew'd, that some are happier than others, and that Difference is to be imputed to the Virtues of some, and the Vices of others. I have prov'd that the World abounds with good Things, that there is no Appetite nor Capacity of Man, that may not find Objects proper and agreeable, and such as in a great Measure may delight and satisfy; and that Man is endowed with such a Variety of Faculties and Senses, that there is scarce any Thing in all the Variety of Beings the World contains, which he is not capable of enjoying. From whence it clearly follows, that Man may be happy in the Enjoyment of these good Things, unless the Evil of Life sour and imbitter the Good, or the Attainment of the Good be out of the Power of Man. To remove all Suspicion of both which I discours'd briefly, of the Nature of Evil, and the Nature of Man, evincing plainly the Impotence and Feebleness of the one, and the Strength and Preparations of the other; and for the Close of all, I have endeavour'd to make it manifest, that Good and Evil are not so much the Result of Time or Chance, as the necessary Consequence of Wisdom and Folly. From all which the Conclusion that naturally arises is this: That if Man be miserable it is his own Fault, or, which is all one, a Man may be happy if he will, which was the Thing to be proved.

LET us try now by a close Application of all that has been said, to the Wants and Necessities of Mankind, what the Evidence, what the Conviction, what the real Use and Force of this Discourse is. I am unhappy, I am miserable; whosoever thou art that sayst so, thou must needs mean one of these two Things. Thou dost enjoy no Good,
or

or art oppress'd with Evil; If the latter, I demand what Evil? Speak out, speak plainly. There are three sorts of Evils, the Evils of the Mind, the Evils of the Body, the Evils of Fortune. Which of these art thou oppress'd by? The Evils of the Mind? These are either sinful Passions, or what is the Effect of them, guilty Fears: Nothing can compel thee to be Wicked; and if thou wilt cease to be Wicked, thou wilt cease to fear. The Evils of the Body? They are generally the Effect of unruly Passions and a disorderly Life; and where they are not, the Pleasures of the Mind will out-weigh the Pains of the Body. The Evils of Fortune? It is in thy Power whether these shall be really Evils, or no; they befall thy Possessions, not thee: The foolish and vicious Mind only suffers in these, the wise and virtuous one is above them; it is therefore thy own Fault if thou be oppress'd with Evil. But wilt thou say? I enjoy no Good, no satisfactory Good? Why, is there no Good, to be enjoy'd? I have already prov'd the Contrary; and if I had not, how easy were it here to do it? There is Truth to entertain thy Understanding, Moral Perfections to delight thy Will, Variety of Objects to treat thy Senses, the Excellences of the visible and invisible World to be enjoyed by thee: Why then dost thou defer to live? Why dost thou not begin to enjoy? Here it is evident that thou must be forced to say one of these two Things, either that thou art not capable of enjoying the Blessings, or that they are out of thy Reach, out of thy Power: To say thou art not capable of them is to renounce the Faculties of thy Soul, and the Senses of thy Body: To say they are out of thy Reach, is in Effect to say that Virtue and Vice, Wisdom and Folly are all one; or, which is every jot as absurd, that thou art wicked and sottish, and canst not help it. And this is that

indeed which in Effect all do say that accuse Fortune, or Fate, or Nature, or any Thing but themselves, as the Causes of their Misery: And yet as absurd as this is, it must be now examined, because the Minds of Men are perverted and discouraged by such Notions. I will therefore now proceed to the next Thing, that is, to answer the Objections against the Attainment of Happiness.



CHAP. III.

GOD is not the Cause of Man's Misery.

WOULD Men talk coherently, the Assertion of my former Chapter would meet but few Opposers; none can be rationally allowed to deny the Possibility of Happiness, but such as assert Fate: For he that leaves to Man his Liberty, leaves him in a Capacity of Happiness; it being hardly possible to conceive, that a Man should be free in his Choice of Good and Evil, and yet necessarily or unavoidably miserable: Besides, few of those who are fond of Fate, are willing to extend its Empire over the Liberty of Man's Mind; it being as easy to confute their Fancy, if they did, by some Instance of a free Choice, as it was by Moving or Walking to confute his, who denied Motion.

If it be in the next Place considered, that none can rationally maintain Fate, but such as deny a GOD, since the Belief of a GOD does naturally include his Creation and Government of the World;
and

and this again as naturally infers, either Vice or Virtue, Rewards or Punishments. All this put together, amounts to thus much, that none should exclude Happiness, but such as exclude GOD and Liberty out of the World; and since very few I hope are guilty of this, I ought to have very few Antagonists. But when I am to answer Objections, I am not to consider so much what Men should say, as what they do: Since therefore Men are wont to impute their Misery one while to GOD, and another to Chance, I must examine what Justice there is in these Complaints.

IN this Chapter therefore I shall not only vindicate GOD from all Aspersions and Calumnies, but also fully assert the Love of GOD to Mankind, whereby I shall not only baffle all the poor Pretences of such as charge GOD directly or obliquely with their Misery, but also more strongly establish my own Position, by demonstrating GOD's Readiness to contribute all Assistance that is necessary to our Attainment of Happiness. In prosecuting this, I shall,

First, EVINCE the Importance of entertaining right Notions of GOD.

Secondly, BECAUSE of all GOD's Attributes, his Goodness and Holiness have the most direct Influence on the present Question, I shall particularly confine myself to these two.

To begin with the *First*, The chief Thing in Religion is to have true Notions of GOD, it being otherwise impossible that Religion should serve the great Interest of GOD's Glory and Man's Happiness; for false and unworthy Notions of Him must needs bereave GOD of the Honour and Worship due to Him

Him from his Creatures, by alienating the Minds of Men, and betraying them into Superstition, Idolatry, or Atheism; and thus that Religion which was designed to glorify GOD by the Manifestation of his Divine Excellencies, and to advance Man in a State of Blessedness, by influencing his Life, and filling his Mind with Chearfulness, shall be perverted to Ends directly contrary, and prove instrumental to dishonour GOD, and render Man miserable. The Truth of this has been too evident in those visible Effects of Ignorance, or Misrepresentation of the Divine Nature amongst the *Gentiles*; the Want of conceiving aright his Omnipotence and Immensity, joined with the numerous Necessities of Mankind, did bring forth, or at least confirm Polytheism; groundless Apprehensions of Cruelty in GOD brought forth Superstition, and the Absurdities of Polytheism and Superstition gave Birth to Atheism: And at this Day there are many Mischiefs which I must impute either to false Notions of GOD, or Want of just Consideration of the true Ones, or at least to not arguing clearly and truly from them. For from one of these Reasons it proceeds, that the Worship of some Men is so slight, empty and trifling; the Religion of others so melancholy and uncomfortable, and truly superstitious: And I am afraid there is too much of Atheistical Looseness, carnal Presumption, and wretched Despair, owing to the same Cause. Would not a right Notion of GOD easily convince a scrupulous Trifler, that GOD were not to be pleased but by sincere and substantial Holiness, nor displeased but by voluntary Wickedness? All Things else weighing nothing in the Balance of the Sanctuary, and not deserving the Notice or Regard of the Governor of the World.

It is evident therefore, of what Importance it is to settle in the Minds of Men a right Understanding of the Divine Nature; and of all the Attributes of GOD, there are none that have a more immediate and powerful Influence, either upon the Conduct of Man's Life, or the Comfort of his Mind, than these two, his Holiness and Goodness: These make us willing and desirous to believe that there is a GOD; these make us love Him and depend upon Him, as one from whom we may rationally expect all that is Good: *He that comes to GOD, (saith St. Paul) must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of all those that diligently seek Him.* These Words do not only assert the Being of a GOD, but also his Holiness and Goodness; both which may be clearly inferr'd from three Propositions couch'd in those Words of the Apostle, *that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.* 1. That all Men may seek GOD diligently if they will. 2. That it is the Desire of GOD that they should do so. And, 3. That GOD will reward all that do so.

ON these Principles is Religion founded, on these Principles the Honour of GOD, and the Happiness of Man must be establish'd. I will therefore discourse here, *1st*, of the Goodness; and *2dly*, of the Holiness of GOD, which I distinguish from one another only for Method's Sake.

TREATING of the Goodness of GOD, I will,

First, PROVE it by undeniable Arguments.

Secondly, I WILL shew, that it extends itself to Man.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, I WILL explain the Nature of Divine Assistance, I mean that which GOD vouchsafes Man in order to Happiness.

First therefore, To begin with the Proofs of GOD's infinite Goodness.

CRUELTY was the Property of the *Gentile* Gods, and not of the true GOD; human Blood, in which the *Canaanites*, *Carthaginians*, and others sacrificed, was an Oblation fit for *Baal* or *Molech*, that is, for Devils, not for GOD. Innate Wrath and Cruelty is inconsistent with a happy Nature or a happy State, for these are furious and tormenting Passions; nor can we imagine that such a Being should make its Residence in Heaven, a Place of Peace and Love, or be delighted with Hallelujahs, and Adorations of Angels: This were no Pleasure, no Musick, to a Being in whom Wrath and Cruelty were predominant: Nor were those good, those holy, those charitable Spirits, fit Attendants, fit Ministers for such a Being. No, could we suppose that there were an evil God, one in whom Cruelty and Wrath were his beloved Attributes; we must necessarily conclude, that he would make Hell his Court, that his Guards and Courtiers would be Fiends and Furies, and that the Shrieks and Torments of wretched Creatures would be the Pleasure, the Harmony he delighted in: This were a God fit for a *Hobbist*, one who can discern no Difference between Virtue and Vice, between Good and Evil. And yet I cannot but retract and condemn this Thought; for O! no other GOD is fit for him, but He whom he denieth: No other GOD is fit for such a Wretch, but the GOD of Love and Mercy; to whom I recommend him.

THIS Notion of the Deity, which represented that Being which was kind and benign, as terrible and dreadful; which was gracious and fatherly, as tyrannical; which was friendly and careful of us, as injurious and hurtful; which was mild and gentle, as fierce and savage; always gave such a Dis-taste to all ingenious Tempers, that they thought Atheism a much more excusable Impiety than Superstition. Hence is that of *Plutarch*, "I had rather Men should say of me, there neither was, nor is such a one as *Plutarch*, than that they should say, that he was a Man of a fickle, inconstant, froward, revengeful and implacable Temper." Let us not therefore entertain such an Idea of GOD, as human Nature would recoil from, and start back, pale and scar'd at the Sight: Let us not fasten those Characters upon GOD, which a good temper'd Man, if charged with them, would look upon as the foulest Reproaches and most injurious Accusations; especially since a Defect is not only more conspicuous, but more reproachful, where there should be nothing but Perfection: And Peevishness and Cruelty are infinitely more mischievous in an almighty, than impotent Being. I might shun *Polycrates*, *Dionisius*, *Periander*, but how should I shun GOD? I might leave *Samos*, *Sicily*, or *Corinth*, and where Clemency and Justice made their Abode, I might make mine: But whether should I go, what Place should be my Refuge, if the Governor of the World were but an Almighty Tyrant?

THUS it is manifest, such Kind of Representations of GOD tend not to enamour Man with GOD, but to alienate and estrange him; they tend not to advance Religion, but Superstition; they tend to make Men dread GOD, but not love Him; they are therefore to be banish'd out of the World, and
GOD

GOD is to be represented such as our dear LORD, who lay in the Bosom of his Father, has revealed Him, *A GOD of Hope, a GOD of Love, a GOD who is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.* This is the Dictate of Nature, this is the Dictate of the Spirit, *GOD is Love.*

NOR let GOD's Dealings with the Gentile World before the Revelation of Christianity, be alledged as an Objection against the Goodness of GOD, and his Tenderness and Compassion for Mankind; it is true, *GOD in Times past suffered all Nations to walk in their own Ways; and the Times of this Ignorance He winked at:* He published no revealed Law to the *Gentiles* from Heaven, He deputed no Prophets to them, as to his People the *Jews*, with a Commission to restore by Signs and Miracles, that natural Religion conformably to which they were to worship GOD; which is the Import of those Places of *St. Paul*: And it is true that the Belief of the living and true GOD, and the natural Law of Good and Evil was strangely effaced amongst the *Gentiles*. But notwithstanding all this, it must be remembered too,

I. THAT GOD left not Himself without a Witness in any Age of *Gentilism*; the Heathens were never destitute of so much Light as might have conducted them to GOD, and that Happiness He designed them: For besides the Traditions transmitted from *Noah* to Posterity, the Book of Nature and Providence was ever open to them, and this did in most legible Characters assert the Being of one Supreme GOD, and instructed them in the Knowledge of his Power and Goodness: Thus *St. Paul*, *Nevertheless He left not Himself without a Witness in that He did Good, and gave us Rain from Heaven, and fruitful Seasons, filling our Hearts with Food*

Food and Gladness. Nor was this Testimony so unsuccessful, but that in all Ages there were some who did ascribe the Original and Government of the World to God, and gave such an Account of his Holiness and Goodness as was sufficient to have founded a rational and excellent Worship upon: These were so many Lights shining in dark Places, as so many Justifications of Divine Providence, and Reproaches of Man's wilfull Stupidity.

2. It is not in the least to be doubted, but that the Nature of their Duty, and consequently the Condition of their Happiness was proportioned to those Manifestations which God made them, to those Obligations which He laid before them, and to that Strength and Assistance which He vouchsafed them: For GOD is not a hard Master, He will not make good the Accusation of the wicked Servant; *He will not take up what He laid not down, nor reap what He did not sow.* In a Word, if GOD doth at the last Day deal with Men according to those several Œconomies of his Providence which they are under; and if He has afforded all Nations Means proportionable to those Duties He required of them, and to those Degrees of Happiness to which He designed them, then He was always the GOD of the *Gentiles* as well as once of the *Jews*, or now of the *Christians*; and there is no one Part in the whole Series of Providence which can give us any Colour to call into Question the Care or Goodness of GOD towards Mankind.

THE Barrenness of some Countries, the Servitude and Poverty of some People is a much slighter Objection; for 'till it can appear, that Poverty is an Enemy to Virtue, or that Wealth, the Nurse of Sloth and Wantonness, is absolutely necessary to Man's Happiness, it will weigh but very little

against so many Demonstrations of Divine Love, that He has not heaped on all Nations so many temporal Blessings as might put them into a Capacity of being lazy, wanton and insolent.

Now give me leave to make a Stand, and like a Traveller when he has gained an Assent, look back upon the Way I have gone: My Undertaking was to demonstrate the Love of GOD to Mankind; thus far I have advanced towards this with undeniable Evidence; I have proved, that Peevishness, Malignity and Cruelty cannot belong to GOD, because this were inconsistent with the Perfection of his Nature, or the Happiness of his State: Nor can it rationally be supposed, that the same Properties should belong to those evil Spirits which for a long Time deluded the World, and that GOD who has done so much to destroy that Kingdom of Darkness, to rescue Man, and to restore him to a Capacity of Happiness; how could it be, that GOD should have done so much, as it appears He has in the Contexture of our Nature, and the Contrivance of our State, to make us in love with Goodness, and irreconcilable Enemies to Tyranny, Cruelty, arbitrary Revenge; if He Himself were passionate, furious, and arbitrary in his Cruelties? Nay, I have advanced further, and have proved, *Secondly*, That boundless Love and Goodness are the unquestionable Attributes of GOD: Nor doth the unconceivable Majesty and Eminence of the Divine Nature only, but also the Indigence and Weakness of human Nature require this; since without it, He could not be the Object of our Love or Dependence, nor consequently of our Worship.

HAVING proceeded thus far, and proved that Tyranny or Cruelty are utterly repugnant to the Divine

Divine Nature, and boundless Love and Goodness the essential and inseparable Properties of it.

I MUST now *Secondly*, take Notice, that the Goodness of GOD extends to Man, and has a particular Regard to his Happiness. The World being now created, and Mankind formed after GOD's Image (*τὸ δὲ λὸγ εἶσιν, we are his Off-spring*, saith St. Paul out of the Poet) unactive and unconcerned Love seems to me a Contradiction, and infinite boundless Goodness confined within Heaven cannot but seem as gross an one: Let it therefore remain an unshaken Truth, that GOD is good, and that this Goodness doth exert and express itself towards Mankind, and we shall from hence gain these two Points.

1. THAT GOD *is not the Cause of Man's Misery*: And what is more yet;

2. THAT *He is most ready to further and assist him in all his Endeavours after Happiness.*

THE first of these is apparent: For if GOD be infinitely good, then every Thing that came out of his Hands must in the State of its Creation have been exceeding good; the End of the Creation must have been something extremely kind and gracious; and the Law He prescribed his Creatures for the Attainment of that End, must be as good as wise: This must have been the glorious State of Things when GOD contrived this wonderful Frame of Nature, when He erected this vast Work, the World; and in all the continued Progress of Divine Providence, we are to expect no other Acts of Government than what may become the most gracious Prince, the most tender Father; for the same immense Goodness that once

created, doth ever continue to rule the World: Let us not therefore accuse GOD but ourselves, if we be not happy. Blessings indeed and Mercies, like fruitful Seasons, descend upon us without our Importunity; but Evils and Mischiefs come not 'till our Sins and Provocations have pulled them down upon us. GOD may indeed, like a kind Parent, train up a Son through a strict Discipline to Virtue and Glory: He may throw Difficulties in our Way on Purpose to reward our Conquest: He may, like a wise Physician, restore us to our Health by bitter Potions; and He will, like an excellent Governor, punish, if Need be, our wanton Contempt of Love and Mercy, by Severity; but He will never, like a savage Tyrant, delight in the Sufferings or Ruin of innocent Subjects; He will never prescribe impossible Laws, that He may enjoy the Pleasure of bloody Executions; He will never make the Groans of wretched People his Musick; nor think Misery and Death the best Marks of his absolute Power, or fairest Ornaments of his Throne: No, we shall never need any other Proof to clear the Divine Majesty from any such Imputation, than to examine ourselves, and reflect upon our own Behaviour; we shall soon find that we alone are guilty of our Ruin, and that GOD is utterly free from it; our excessive Enjoyments create the Diseases of the Body, and our excessive Passions the Pains and Torments of the Mind, and most of the Changes in our Fortune derive themselves from both: A languishing Body, and a languishing Reputation, a broken Estate, and a dejected Mind are the common Effects of a disorderly Life; and such a Life is the natural Effect of a Mind enslaved to the Body, and estranged from GOD, not only by a Neglect, but by a Contempt of all those Means by which a good GOD designed to bring him

him thro' Virtue to Glory; and then at last a guilty Conscience, a distracted Mind, and a miserable Death, is the Consequence and End of all: This is the Progress which our Sin and Folly make; we cannot think that a good God can direct or necessitate us to these Courses, they are as repugnant to his Laws, as to our Interest; and the same Time we forfeit our Happiness, we disappoint his Love and Goodness: All the Ways and Methods of GOD are kind and gracious, and wise and rational; inanimate Bodies do not desert those Offices He has prescribed them; Animals move regularly by those Instincts He has implanted in them, and so both the one and the other necessarily serve those excellent Ends for which they were created: But Man having Liberty wove into the Constitution of his Nature, and having no compulsory but only a directing Law prescribed him, has perverted his own Ways, abused his Liberty, and made that his Ruin, which if well used had enhanced his Reward. This is the Account which the Scripture gives us of Man's Misery, it imputes it wholly to himself, and represents his Obstinacy as displeasing to GOD, as it is fatal to himself: *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself. As I live, I delight not in the Death of a Sinner; turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die? O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy Children together, even as a Hen gathers her Chickens under her Wings, and ye would not?*

BUT this is not all we gain from the Assurance of GOD's infinite Goodness, that we have no Reason to apprehend any Harm from Him, that He cannot be the Author of our Misery; but we

may confidently persuade ourselves on the other Side,

Secondly, THAT He is most ready to further and assist us in all our Endeavours after Happiness. And now methinks I am so far from questioning the Possibility of attaining Happiness, that I begin already to feel and enjoy it; I see the Day breaking in upon me from Above: How can he chuse but be happy who is the Love, the Care of God! I may walk like *Peter* on the Waves, and bid Defiance to the Storms, I know I shall never sink, whilst that God upholds me, who calls me this Way to Him; I can now easily believe that my Temper may be transformed, my Corruption put off, and I be made Partaker of a divine Nature; since the Spirit of God will dwell with me, the Light of God will shine upon me, and the Power of God will succour me: Can I imagine as much as any Colour why I should not now be able to attain to an excellent State of Virtue, or why this Virtue should not be able to vanquish all those Difficulties that oppose my Happiness, since I am assured that God will not refuse me his Spirit if I ask it, and that his Grace will be sufficient for me?

You see of what vast Importance this Truth is, that God will be always ready to assist every Man in his Endeavours after Happiness; and therefore tho' it stands here as a necessary and undeniable Conclusion from the foregoing Discourse, tho' the Perfection of the Divine Nature amounts to little less than a Demonstration of it; for Beneficence to his Creatures is necessarily included in the Notion of Perfection; yet I will dwell a little longer on the Confirmation and Illustration of it. There are three eminent Acts of Divine Assistance;

ance; The *First* is such a Direction of the Events of secular Affairs, that they may tend to our Good. The *Second* is his Assistance of us in the Attainment of Virtue: And the *Third* is, his recruiting us by fresh Supplies of Strength in all our hazardous Conflicts and extraordinary Trials. Now tho' I could not give an Account of the Manner how GOD performs this kind Work of his Providence yet ought not that to dissuade me from the Belief of it; because we know that our Comprehension ought not to be the Standard of divine Perfections, nor the narrow Bounds of our Imagination the utmost extent of the Almighty's Power. However it is not difficult to explain this Assistance of GOD in such Sort as may free it from the least Suspicion of implying a Contradiction.

FOR, *First*, as to his Direction of temporal Events, how easy will it be for us to conceive this possible to GOD, if we consider, first, That GOD can form what Impressions He pleases in the Minds of Men, and inspire them with what Affections He shall think most serviceable to his Designs? For there is not the least Colour to imagine that the Soul is any more exempt from the Sovereignty of GOD than the Body; or that GOD cannot do that which the Great, or the Cunning, or the eloquent, nay the Popular and Ambitious seldom fail to do, raise what Passions He pleases in the Mind of Man. Or if we consider, *Secondly*, That the Power and Efficacy of Nature is wholly in his Hands, that Life or Death, Plenty or Poverty, every Thing depends upon his Will; for the Winds and Seas, Earth and Air, Fire, Hail, and Vapours obey his Voice, and are all of them, as often as He pleases, the Instruments and Executioners of his Will: He that stills the Ragings of the Multitude, and calms the Passions of the
Mighty;

Mighty ; He at whose Command new Creatures enter upon the Stage of the World, and the old leave it ; what is impossible for Him to do ? Nay, what is it this Almighty Governor cannot do, without moving one Step out of the common Road of his Providence, without employing any extraordinary Instrument, or exerting any extraordinary Power ? For what secular Interest can there be imagined whose Success or Disappointment depends not upon some or other of these natural Causes ? And yet we must acknowledge further, *Thirdly*, That the Almighty has not set Himself such immutable, unalterable Laws, but that He has reserved to Himself the Prerogative of suspending or over-ruling them when He pleases, I mean with Respect to the Motions of natural Bodies, or Revolutions of secular Affairs ; and if such an Interposal of divine Power cannot be conceived to be other than a Miracle, I must confess, I do not look upon one Age only, but every Age as an Age of Miracles ; nay, I believe such as these are wrought every Day for the Protection or Relief of those who depend upon this Governor of the World ; for I know not to what Purpose I should, like *Jonah* or his Mariners, call upon God in a Storm, if it were never to be laid 'till it had spent its Force and Fury ; I know not to what Purpose I should implore the Almighty's Direction upon all my Deliberations in perplexed and entangled Affairs, if I could expect no other Light than what my labouring Mind could give itself ; I know not why I should address myself to God in the Pains and Danger of an unsupportable Disease, if the Medicines will be the same, and their Virtue the same, if the Fever will abate, and its Flames be extinguished, or extinguish Life in the same Degree and Manner, if I pray, or if I do not. All these Ways of Divine Providence
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are very plain and intelligible; and therefore it is manifest that we may, without any Absurdity, ascribe to GOD such a Superintendency over Human Affairs, as may render the Issue of them most serviceable to the true Interest of those that worship Him.

As to the second Part of Divine Assistance, which consists in aiding us in the Attainment of Holiness, I readily acknowledge, as far as this is performed by the internal Operations of the Spirit, by the Influx of Divine Light or Heavenly Vigour, I do no more understand the Manner of Sanctification, than that of the Creation of the Soul; this I know, that Virtue is a rational Work, which implies the Knowledge of our Duty, and a Power to perform it; And therefore this I know, that this Aid must consist in the Improvement of my rational Faculties in some Accession to the Reason of my Understanding, and to the Power and Reason of my Will. Now though I cannot comprehend how GOD does this, yet how easily can I believe it possible for Him to do it, since it is natural to imagine, that He who created my Understanding can improve it, and He who invested me with Liberty can confirm or enlarge it, or (if you please) rescue it from that diseased and servile Condition, into which it was degenerated, and restore it to the Health and Soundness of its first State.

THE third Act of Divine Providence does not imply a new Manner, but a new Degree of Assistance, and therefore contains in it no new Difficulty: And as to the Truth and Certainty of this Sort of Assistance, no Man who believes the Gospel can question it, since this every where ascribes as well Perfections as Conversion to GOD; as well,
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the Finishing as the Beginning of Sanctification to his Grace; it every where promises us the *Might and Power* of GOD's Spirit to *strengthen and establish us, and exhorts us to come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help us in the Time of Need.*

BUT it doth not so nearly concern the Happiness of Man to be instructed in the Manner, as to be thoroughly persuaded of the Truth of Divine Assistance; and therefore choosing rather to be tedious than defective in the Proof of it, I will add to those Arguments taken from the Nature of GOD, whatever Force and Strength can be derived from the Consideration of Divine Government, which is the Expression of the Divine Nature, and the Image of its Perfection visible in its Effect.

THE Gospel contains this Doctrine in almost every Page, and the Lives of Apostles and Martyrs are so many illustrious Instances of the Divine Favour and Love, performing those Promises which He had made them by his Son. The *Jewish* Polity was a Theocracy; GOD did for a great while preside over them immediately, and govern them (if I may so speak) without a Substitute or Viceroy; repeated Miracles, repeated Prophecies, extraordinary Manifestations of Himself, and extraordinary Revelations were the illustrious Proofs of GOD's Affection and Care for that People; so that it were to insult over my Reader's Patience, if I should go about to confirm this Truth from the Old or New Testament; it is therefore only necessary to examine what the Heathen thought of the Necessity of this Divine Assistance, and what Instances of it may be found amongst them.

WHETHER

WHETHER the *Gentiles* had any Notion of the Fall of Man, is not here necessary to be enquired; but this I am sure, they were extremely sensible of that Opposition which Virtue met with from the World and the Body; they were extremely sensible that the Inclinations of the one, and the Affluence and Troubles of the other did naturally tend to engage them in Vice; and therefore tho' they sometimes magnify Human Nature, yet they were not so forgetful of their own Infirmities, or the Condition of this Life, as not to judge the Assistance of GOD indispensably necessary to render them virtuous and happy: Hence it is that *Pythagoras*, *Socrates*, and *Plato* were eminent in that Part of Religion which consists in Prayer and Invocation: The Life of *Socrates* was a Life of Prayer.

AND hence it was that they generally ascribed their Laws to those Gods from whom they received their Oracles; the *Cretaxs*, *Romans*, &c. not more confidently believing that they received Laws from *Minos* or *Numa Pompilius*, than that these received them from *Jove*, *Ageria*, and other Gods: And I wonder not that *Cicero* should say, *Nunquam vir magnus sine Divino afflatu*; There never was a great Man enjoyed not some Divine Impulse; since it did so generally obtain through the Pagan World to attribute all the surprising Excellencies, or extraordinary Exploits of their eminent Men to the immediate Favour and Patronage of their Gods.

NOR let any one think that this was usual only amongst the barbarous People: *Athens* itself, *Athens*, the very Abode of Wit and Philosophy, attributed the Perfections of *Eleusnian Melesagoras* and *Cretan Epimenides* to the Instruction of some Divine

Divine Being, and those of *Socrates* to his Guardian Angel, as well as the *Scythians* those of their *Zamolxis*, or they of *Proconesus* those of *Aristeus*, to the peculiar Favour and Assistance of their God: Nor ought it to seem strange that the Works of *Hesiod*, *Homer*, or other Poets should be ascribed by the Heathens to Divine Inspiration, since those of *Aboliah* and *Bezaleel* are by *Moses* himself ascribed to the Spirit of GOD; for the Poems of the former could not but seem to the Heathens as a rich Piece of Fancy, as the Embroideries of the latter did to *Jews*: And this puts me in Mind of an excellent Argument *Maximus Tyrius* makes Use of to prove Virtue to be derived from the Assistance of GOD: *If Arts (saith he) less excellent in their Nature, and less useful in their End, be owing to GOD, how much more Virtue, the Divine Guide and Comfort of Human Life? If there be no Good that descends not from Above, much less surely the chief and sovereign Good of Man.*

THUS far I have proceeded to shew you what the Heathens thought of the Necessity of Divine Assistance, even in the Attainment of Virtue; for as to secular Matters, and temporal Events, their Sense of the over-ruling Power and Influence of Divine Providence was so notorious, that it is not to be called in Question; the Being and Providence of GOD (in this Sense of it) seemed so inseparable, that the *Epicurean* who denied the latter, could never find Belief when he professed himself to own the former: Nay, even those very Men who could not be convinced of a Providence by the Bounty, were convinced of it by the Severity of GOD in his Chastisement of Sins. Such is Man's disingenuous Temper, that he is more convinced by the Wideness and Fatality of a Wound, that it was inflicted by an Almighty Arm, than he

he is by the Greatness of the Benefits he receives, that they are distributed by a Divine Munificence; though the Number and infinite Value of the good Things we receive be in itself a much clearer Proof of a Divine Providence, than the Evils we suffer can be; for these we can create ourselves, these none but GOD can bestow.

AND this Opinion of the Necessity of GOD's Assistance sprung not only from the Experience of the Weakness and Corruption of human Nature, but also of the Power and Goodness of the Divine Nature; for I cannot think that the Order, Beauty, and Greatness of the Creation, the fixed and constant Returns of fruitful Seasons, *the filling Mens Hearts with Food and Gladness*, were the only Testimonies which GOD gave the *Gentiles* of Himself, and his Care for Mankind: When I read that *Angels are the ministring Spirits of GOD*; when I read in *Daniel*, of the Princes of *Græcia* and *Persia*, and find that Provinces were committed to Angels as the Viceroys and Lieutenants of GOD, I cannot think that these devout and charitable Spirits did with less Zeal in their Provinces labour to promote the Honour of GOD, and the Good of Man, than evil Spirits did the Dishonour of the one, and the Ruin of the other: And unless the frequent Appearances of Angels in the Beginning had possessed Mens Minds with a firm Persuasion that there was a constant Commerce maintained between Heaven and Earth, and that Spirits did very frequently engage themselves in the Protection and Assistance of Men, I cannot imagine what Foundation there could be for the numerous Impostures of Oracles, or upon what Ground the Custom of putting themselves under the Patronage of some Tutelar Spirit, could so generally have prevailed in the *Pagan* World: Without this Superstition, the Poetry of

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Homer had been so far from being entertained as sacred and inspired, that it had been universally contemned as an idle Rhapsody of unnatural, incredible Characters of their Gods. How could any Man, who had never heard of the Appearances of Spirits, nay who could not conceive any other Notion of such Fancies, than as absurd and impossible, ever digest the gross Confidence of a Poet bringing in a God upon the Stage at every Turn? I do not therefore doubt, but that the *Gentile* World received very many good Offices and Advantages from good Angels, as well as suffered many Mischiefs from evil Ones: And I think I might with good Probability believe, that every good Heathen, as well as *Socrates*, had the Assistance of a good Spirit.

NOR was the Ministry of Angels the only Assistance that GOD afforded the *Gentile* World, but in every Age He raised up wise and good Men, to be his Prophets, or Interpreters of Nature's Law to the *Gentiles*. It is true, their Faith differ'd from that of a Christian, and no Man could expect it otherwise; for how vast is the Distance between the Light of Nature and that of Revelation? But if we look upon those Motives by which they were acted, they were such as a Christian need not be ashamed of; they looked upon it not only as the Perfection of human Nature, the Bond and Support of Society, the Delight, the Guide and Comfort of every particular Man's Life; but also as the Image of GOD, as the only Thing that could unite Man to GOD, that could raise Man above the Pollutions of Sensuality, that could enable him to out-brave the Fears of Fortune and of Death; as that which could fit him for the Conversation of Heaven; and lastly, they looked upon it as the Gift of GOD.

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WHO sees not now, that GOD by raising up such Men, and assisting them with a Spirit of Wisdom and Courage, which the Constancy of many of them in suffering for these Truths and the Lustre of their Writings in those dark Times abundantly testified, was an undoubted Proof of GOD's Goodness to the *Gentiles*, and of his Concern for their true Interest and Happiness? Why should not this Light which GOD lent the then wandering benighted Part of Mankind, be as kindly interpreted by Man, as it was designed by GOD? Why should not the Philosophers of the *Gentiles* be looked upon as Priests and Prophets, suited to the Œconomy of the Law of Nature? Very excellent Use have Christians, even the most learned and pious, made of them; and surely they ought to have proved as much more beneficial to the World they lived in, as they were then more necessary.

I THINK I have by this Time said enough, not only to extinguish in any Man all superstitious Fears, and unworthy Apprehensions of the Divine Majesty; but also to enkindle in him a grateful Love of GOD, and chearful Hopes of true Happiness, by establishing this Persuasion upon unshaken Foundations, That GOD is a good and gracious GOD, That He is always ready to assist every Man in his Endeavours after Happiness. But let not that Doctrine be perverted to the betraying of us into Sloth, which was designed to inspire the Mind with fresh Vigour, to quicken and confirm us in an industrious Pursuit after our true Happiness: For we must remember, that GOD is not only good and gracious, but also,

2dly, HOLY too: I shall not insist long on this Point, because it is already proved; Holiness being as necessarily implied in Perfection, as Love or Goodness.

Goodness. I know some have talked, as if God were a mere arbitrary Being, as if his Laws were not the Image or Expression of his Nature, but merely the positive Precepts of an arbitrary Will. If any Man can believe that the most perfect Being can love or hate without any Reason; or that all the Laws and Actions of God shall be consonant to the strictest Rules of Justice and Goodness, and all this by Chance; for mere arbitrary Motion is blind and unguided; such a one seems to me as incapable as he is unworthy of Instruction. I can as soon believe Lightning and Thunder, Wind and Storm a God, as believe Him to be a mere arbitrary Being. If we consult the Scriptures, nothing is more evident than the Sanctity of the Divine Nature: We are there exhorted *to walk in the Light, because God is Light*; and *to be holy, because He is holy*; which Holiness doth not regard the Declaration of his Will, but his Nature; this being given as a Motive to oblige us to walk according to his righteous Precepts, because this alone is that which can please a righteous God, this alone is that which can make us like and dear to Him: From this Attribute of God, Holiness, we may plainly infer,

First, THAT we are not to expect any Assistance from Him, but then, when that which we enterprize is just and lawful, and we ourselves are not wanting to ourselves; for it is inconsistent with the Holiness of God, to make his Providence the Refuge of Laziness or Impiety. God is the Hope of Virtue, not the Excuse of Sloth and Cowardice. This is a safe Rule to guide our Faith and Reliance by; in all our Distresses and Difficulties we must have Recourse to God, for these are the Times wherein human Infirmary requires the Support of Divine Assistance: The utmost Strength and Perfection of Virtue is too weak to bear the Shock
of

of Calamity alone, *it must be reinforced by Power from Above.* But then our own Courage and Industry must be as vigorous as our Prayers; for in vain do we beg new Supplies of Strength, if we use not what we enjoyed before. Divine Bounty doth never supercede Man's Industry; fruitful Showers and enlivening Rays do not prevent, but second the Labours of the Husbandman: God observes the same Method in the Production of a nobler Sort of Fruit, Wisdom and Virtue; the Soul, as well as the Field of the Sluggard, shall be over-run with Weeds: There only shall the divine Fruit of Happiness grow, where religious Discipline tills the Ground, and wakeful Study sows the Seeds of thriving Truths among the Furrows.

ACCORDINGLY, if we consider the Lives and Practice of excellent Men, none were ever so much Favourites of Heaven, that its Gifts grew up in them, like Corn and Wine in the Golden Age, without Culture and Dressing. Inspiration itself did not exempt Man from the Necessity of Industry, but oblige him to a greater. Thus under the Old Testament, a prophetick Life was a Life of greater Strictness and Retirement than that of others; and in the New, not to mention the Watchings, the Fastings, the Retirements, the Prayers of our LORD and Master, that Account of himself which St. Paul gives us, will inform us, not only what his Life was, but what it was expected the Life of every one should be that shared with him in the Ministry and Dignity of an Apostle: *But in all Things approving ourselves as the Ministers of GOD, in much Patience, in Afflictions; in Necessities, in Distresses, in Labours, in Watchings; by Purity, by Knowledge.*

Secondly, IT is easy to infer from the Sanctity of GOD, that they who expect his Assistance should endeavour to be good and holy: It is Virtue that constitutes a Man a Subject of the heavenly Kingdom, and the Favourite of GOD: Vice is a State of Rebellion and Defiance against GOD, and he that puts off his Allegiance, cannot expect rationally the Benefits of that Government which he refuses to be under.

IT is true, the infinite Goodness and Clemency of GOD, which is not easily vanquish'd by Man's Ingratitude, may pursue such a Man with repeated Overtures and Tenders of Grace and Pardon, and may leave him in the Possession of common Benefits, such as Health, Plenty, Friends; but GOD will never confer upon him the most excellent Gifts, the Marks of his especial Presence and particular Favour; He will withdraw from him the Aids of his Spirit, and leave him to himself, a blind, indigent and forlorn Creature: *The Holy Spirit of Discipline will fly Deceit, and will not abide when Unrighteousness comes in.*

Thirdly, WHAT different Rates we are to set upon the different Gifts of GOD: *Every good Gift, and every perfect Gift comes down from Above:* But every Gift is not equally good: Wealth, Power, Friends, Relations, Health, Strength, Beauty, Wit, Discretion, Virtue, are all good, but not all equal; their Value is different, and therefore the Degrees of our Importunity, and of our Faith and Reliance upon GOD, must be proportioned accordingly: A confident Faith, and an almost impatient Zeal doth well become us when we seek the Kingdom of Heaven and the Righteousness thereof, when we seek of GOD the Divine Gifts of Wisdom and Virtue; but an humble Modesty, and a most profound

found Submission is the Ornament and Beauty of those who are Petitioners for inferior Blessings: For God has promised the former to all that earnestly sue for them, peremptorily and without any Reservations; but his Promises of the latter always imply this Condition, *If they shall be for our Good*: For the Perfections of the Mind are immutable Beauties; but those of the Body, and all the gaudy Things of Fortune, are like the fading Beauties of a Flower, the Heart scorches it, the Cold nips it, every little Chance cracks the Stalk, and the Hand of a Child will serve to crop it. Nothing therefore is more acceptable to God, than the Modesty of our Petitions for *these* good Things, and the Fervency of them for the *other*; nothing more delightful to Him, unless the granting of them.



C H A P. IV.

Of the Influence of Fortune on our Happiness.

A SECOND Thing which Men charge with the Guilt of their Ruin, is *Fortune*. I might pass over this Point slightly, because I have already cleared two great Truths, which are of themselves abundantly sufficient to defeat this trifling Objection; namely, *First*, That Virtue and Vice, Wisdom and Folly, are the Things to which, generally, we owe our temporal Prosperity or Adversity; and consequently, that those, supposing the ordinary Assistance of God, being in our Power, these must be so too. *Secondly*, That we are assured of the Assistance of God, even in these Things, as
far

far as He shall see them truly subservient to our Good. However, because the Persuasion of the Usefulness, nay absolute Necessity of the Favour of Fortune, has taken such deep Root in the Minds of Men, I will bestow a little Time on the Consideration of this Objection.

First, WHAT dost thou mean by Fortune? If mere Chance, then to envy the Lot of others, or murmur at thine own, is Folly; if Providence, then it is Impiety; for whatever Goodness guided by unerring Wisdom doth, must be so well done, that it cannot be mended; and whatever is merely in the Power of a blind, giddy and inconstant Humour, (which is the Notion by which Men chuse to express Fortune) can neither be prevented, fixed nor regulated.

BUT what is it, *Secondly*, thou dost put in the Power of Fortune? The Understanding and Liberty of Mens Minds; Wisdom, Temperance, Industry, Courage, and in one Word Virtue? If thou dost not, she has no Influence on thy Happiness, she cannot prevent thy Attainment of it, nor bereave thee of it when attained: If thou dost, thou dost enlarge the Empire of Fortune too far; let her rule and insult over Soldiers, Courtiers, Lovers, and Time-servers, but not over Philosophers: Let those who are her Minions, be her Slaves; let her dispose of Money, Lands, Honours, Fame; nay, if you will, Crowns and Sceptres too: Virtue and Happiness, and Souls, are too precious Commodities to be the Sport and Traffick of Fortune. *Solomon* observ'd long ago, *Wisdom* cries out, *she uttereth her Voice in the Streets; she cries in the chief Place of Concourse, in the opening of the Gates; in the City she utters her Words.* Our Saviour in the great Day of the Feast cried, saying, *If any Man thirst, let him come unto Me*

Me and drink; which is an Invitation of the same Nature with that of the Prophet, Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the Waters, and he that hath no Money; come ye, buy and eat, buy Wine and Milk without Money, and without Price.

THIS ever was, and ever will be true; a great Fortune is not necessary for the Atainment of Faith, Hope, or Charity; and he that is endowed with these, cannot be miserable: You may learn the whole System of divine and important Truths, you may acquaint yourself with all the Beauty and Enjoyments of Virtue at a very cheap Rate, and you may learn Temperance, Fortitude, Justice, Modesty, Constancy, Patience, Contempt of the World, without the Assistance of much more Wealth than will serve to feed and cloath you: And canst thou not be content with these Possessions? Is not this a Sort of Merchandize to be prefer'd before that of fine Gold?

I KNOW the greater Part of those who accuse their Fortune of their Misery, pretend their Circumstances of Life are so incommodious, that they have not Time to attend to the great Interest of the Soul, or at least not with that Application which they should. Alas, thus not the Mean only, but almost All talk, from the Porter to the Prince: The Circumstances of the one are too narrow; of another too full of Trouble, because too full of State: One complains that he is withdrawn from his great End, by the many Temptations to which his Rank and Quality expose him; another, that he is daily fretted and indisposed by the rugged Conversation which he is necessarily obliged to bear with: One complains of too much Business, another of too little; the Hurry and Multitude of Things distract the one, Infidel Fears and anxious De-

Despondencies the other: One complains that his Acquaintance and Friends are too numerous, and intrench too far upon his precious Hours; another is melancholy and peevish, because he looks upon himself either for his Meanness neglected, or for his Misfortune deserted and forsaken: Company is burdensome to the one, and Solitude to the other.

THUS all Conditions are full of Complaints, from him that trudges on his clouted Shoe, to him who can scarce mention the Manners or the Fortunes of the Multitude, without some Expressions of Disdain. Thou Fool, dost thou not see that all these Complaints are idle and contradictory? For Shame correct the Wantonness of thy Humour, and thou wilt soon correct thy Fortune: Learn to be happy in every State, and every Place: Learn to enjoy thyself, to know and value the Wealth that is in thine own Power, I mean, Wisdom and Goodness: Learn to assert the Sovereignty and Dignity of thy Soul. It is beneath the Dignity of a Soul that has but a Grain of Sense, to make Chance, and Winds, and Waves, the arbitrary Disposers of his Happiness; or what is worse, to depend upon some Mushroom Upstart, which a chance Smile raised out of his Turf and Rottenness, to a Condition to which his mean Soul is so unequal, that he himself wonders at his own Height.

O HOW I hug the Memory of those honest Heathens, who in a ragged Gown, and homely Cottage, bid Defiance to Fortune, and laugh'd at those Pains and Hazards, the Vanity and Pride of Men, not their Misfortune, drove them to! Men may call this Pride, or Spite in *them*; as the Rabble does usually envy the Fortune which it despairs of. But let the Contempt of the World be what it will in a Heathen; let it be Pride and Peevishness, Vain-glory

glory or any Thing, rather than a Reproach to Christians; what say you to the Followers of our LORD and Master? Then said *Peter*, *Silver and Gold have I none*; None? What hast thou then, thou poor Disciple of a poor Master? A true Faith, a God-like Charity, an unshaken Hope: Blessed art thou amongst Men, nothing can make thee greater, nothing richer, nothing happier, but Heaven. You see plainly then, a Man may be virtuous, though not wealthy, and that Fortune which prevents his being rich, cannot prevent his being happy.

THIS Discourse will never down, it is not calculated for this Age; go on then, let us try how far it will be necessary to condescend; you cannot be happy, why? Because you are not rich; go then to GOD, and beg you may be rich; I have not the Face to put up such arrogant Requests to GOD: It is plain then, it is not necessary to be rich in order to be happy; for whatever is necessary to this, thou mayst with good Assurance beg of GOD. But thy Desires are more humble and modest; thou aimest at nothing but what is necessary, a fairer House, another Servant, a Dish or two of Meat more for thy Friends, a Coach for thy Convenience, and a few Hundred Pounds a-piece more for thy Children. O heavenly Ingredients of a rational Pleasure? O divine Instrument of human Happiness! O the humble and mortified Requests of modest Souls! Well, if these Things be so necessary, and these Desires be so virtuous, if thou canst not be happy, and consequently must be miserable without them; put up a Bill, represent thy Condition in it, Such a one——wants a more commodious House, more Servants, more Dishes, &c. and desires the Prayers of the Congregation for Support under this Affliction: “You are profane.”
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I would only let thee see the Wantonness of thy Desires: If thou thinkest this would expose thee to publick Laughter, go to thy Minister, unfold thy Case to him, let him pray for thee, he is a good Man, and his Prayers will go far; "You rally and ridicule me." Enter then into thy Closet, shut thy Door, thou mayst trust GOD, He pities and considers even human Infirmities; "I could even almost in my Mind desire it of Him, but I am ashamed to do it in a set and solemn Prayer; I could almost make the Petition in the gross, but I blush to think of descending to Particulars." Well, then I see plainly that Wealth in any Degree of it is so far from being necessary to our Happiness, it has so little of Usefulness or Conveniency in it, that in thy Conscience between GOD and thee, thou canst not think it fit to complain of the Want of it.

BUT this Answer will never satisfy him who complains of Want, or of being engaged in continual Troubles, and tossed by the daily Changes and Revolutions of the World: I confess it, it will not; but I must tell such a one, if *Solomon's* Observation be true, *The Hand of the Diligent maketh rich*; then his Poverty is his Crime as well as his Calamity; he must redeem himself from this his Punishment by Industry and Prayer. As to Calamities, this must be acknowledged, that the Mind of a good and great Man which stands firm upon its own Basis, a good GOD, a good Saviour, and a good Conscience, may remain unmoved, when the Earth trembles, and the Sea roars round about him: Changes indeed befall Things temporal, but he leans not upon them. I may say farther, that he who upon mature Deliberation, and upon necessary Obligations of Duty engages himself in a just Cause, may be unfortunate, but he cannot be miserable;

miserable; his Sufferings carry a secret Pleasure in them, and his Misfortunes are full of Hope and Glory, if he consider, if he do not feed on vain and airy Projects, and suffer himself to be transported by irrational, though seemingly just Passions. I must *lastly* add, that it is not the Necessity of their Affairs, nor the Iniquity of Times, which commonly involve and entangle Men in publick or private Calamities; but some secret Vanity, some blind impetuous Passion, some ill-laid Project, or some dishonourable Fear.

I MIGHT now presume I had given Satisfaction to this Objection; but the Infection is got into the Mass of Blood, and has diffused itself through Mankind, and it is not a slight Medicine that can purge it out.

My Design therefore is to examine what real Good or Convenience there is in Wealth, and that in such a sober and rational Manner as may be satisfactory and convictive to every unprejudiced Mind.

FIRST therefore, *I will give some Account, whence it is that Men are so intent upon their worldly Interest, so wholly bent upon being rich.*

SECONDLY, *I will state what is meant by a Competency, and what the Advantage and Necessity of it is.*

THIRDLY, *I will consider what the natural Tendency of Wealth is.* From all which it will easily appear, what Connection there is between our Fortune and our Happiness.

IF we enquire whence it is Men are so intent upon the World ; one Reason is, a secret Infidelity. Men are desirous to lay such a Foundation as Time cannot wear out, nor Winds and Tempest overthrow : They cannot trust Providence, 'till they see, or at least fancy themselves in a Condition to defy it : And this they look upon as a great Piece of Prudence, to provide for themselves a safe Retreat from the Storms and Changes that generally pursue Mankind : I cannot tell which is the greater, the Folly or the Impiety of this Humour ; for it is a wretched Folly to flatter ourselves with the vain Hopes of a Security which is not to be found any where beneath Heaven ; or to imagine that a great Estate is less liable to the Blasts of Fortune, than a small one ; nor is the Impiety one Jot less than the Folly ; for what can be more wicked than amidst so many undeniable Proofs of a GOD, and Providence, to let the same anxious and jealous Fears fill and disturb our Minds, which would scarce be pardonable, if there were neither ? What greater Affront can we offer to the Goodness, the Wisdom, the Omnipotence and Faithfulness of GOD, than to refuse to repose the Care, the Trust of providing for us upon Him, when He not only offers, but presses Himself upon the Employment.

A SECOND Cause why we so eagerly pursue Wealth, is Sensuality : Being Strangers to the Peace and Joy of Faith, insensible of the Divine Delight of Charity, incapable of the Extasies, of the full Assurance of Hope, and in general of rational Pleasure ; what can be expected but that both Wind and Tide should drive us violently on another Shore ? I mean the whole Force and Inclination of our Nature should impetuously tend towards sensual, worldly Pleasures, and consequently towards

wards Wealth, as the necessary Instrument of them. "You grant therefore that Wealth is necessary to a pleasurable Life?" To a pleasurable one it is, to a pleasant one it is not. The sensual Pleasure of a sensual Man, *i. e.* one who is all Body and Fancy, requires a good Fund of Wealth, but the temperate Enjoyment of a virtuous Man does not. I grant, that Ease and Rest are necessary to the Sluggish, State to the Proud, Variety to the Intemperate and the Wanton, and to all this Wealth is necessary; but I deny that Sloth or Pride, Intemperance (I will add Niceness) or Wantonness, is necessary to our Happiness: Nay, I will confidently affirm, that a vigorous Mind and active Body is a much greater Pleasure than sluggish Ease; that an humble, if contented, State is much more easy than proud Grandeur, and the *αλαζονεία* *βία* or the *Ostentation of Life* in St. John; that sober and thrifty Temperance is a far greater Pleasure than Variety; and the Modesty, Constancy and Friendship of a virtuous Affection is not only a more calm, generous and steady, but a more transporting Satisfaction than the fanciful Rambles of a wandering Lust. And I hope none will be so fond as to judge Wealth necessary to the obtaining these Virtues; if any are, their Silliness is to be exploded, not seriously confuted. For who can believe, that Ease is the best Nurse of Industry; that State and Grandeur, are the Parents of Humility and Contentment; that Affluence and daily Delicacies are the most effectual Instruments of Abstinence; and that Variety is the Mother of Chastity? If not, then it is apparent how far serviceable Wealth is; for all that lies in its Power is to provide for us these Temptations: But tho' a wise and virtuous Man wants no Wealth, I deny not but that he needs a Competency; what this is, is the next Thing to be enquired: For

this Pretext of having what is enough, is frequently made Use of to justify Avarice and Ambition.

THE Measure of Competency is the Necessities of Nature, not the Extravagancies of Fancy: A little Heap, where frugal Temperance and humble Industry are the Stewards, is a plentiful Provision: But wherever wasteful Luxury and wanton Fancy rule, Plenty itself is a mere Dearth. Competency then is the Provision which the virtuous Man needs as the Support of Life and Instrument of Virtue; the modest Wish of *Jacob*, Gen. xxviii. 20. *Bread to eat and Raiment to put on.* The Use and Advantage of this, is not to keep us or our Children from being exposed to Contempt (that is too slight an Evil for a Christian to dread) but to the barbarous Pity of rich and great Friends. A second Use of it is, that it helps to keep the Mind erect and free; that it puts us into a Capacity of employing our Reason, and enjoying ourselves our own Way; and leaves us not under any Temptation to unmanly Compliances, or Unchristian Jealousies and Fears: For he whose Ambition goes not beyond this, will easily trust Providence, if he believe there be any; or his own Industry, if he believe none: How he that separates Providence and Industry will thrive in this Matter, I know not; but he that joins his own Industry with God's Blessing obtain'd by Prayer, can never miss of this his Aim. Having proceeded thus far, I shall be more easily able to resolve,

Thirdly, WHAT the Value, what the Necessity of Riches is. But I do not call every Thing Wealth, that is not mere Beggary; I have allowed of a Competency as very convenient even for a virtuous Man. In the next Place, I trouble not myself about the Grandeur or Security of Kingdoms,

doms, tho' peradventure the *Scythian* Poverty, or *Roman* Virtue is a stronger Bulwark, a better Guard of these than the Riches of *Asia*. And in the last Place I do not enquire, what Use Wisdom and Virtue are able to make of Wealth, which can extract Pleasure and Happiness even out of Troubles and Afflictions, but what the natural Tendency of Wealth is. These Things being observed, let us come to a Trial of the Matter. If Contentment and Security were the natural Effects of Wealth, if to be rich and to be happy were the same Thing, then it were not to be wondered at, that Wealth should be the great Idol, and Ambition of Mankind: But if it neither frees Men from those Passions of the Mind, nor those Diseases of the Body, nor other Calamities which embitter Life to the inferior Part of Mankind; what then is the Advantage of it? Let us stand still and consider: Do not Hatred and Anger, Envy and Anxiety, Ambition and Lust reign more frequently and more insolently in the Bosom of the Great and Wealthy, than of the labouring Cottager? Nay, I believe upon a narrow Search we shall find that some Passions are the Prerogative of a proud and insolent Fortune, and are not incident to a mean one; such as haughty Anger, irreconcilable Hatred, an unlimited Ambition, and an uneasy Wantonness: The Plowman and the Artift, the Labourer and the Hind know none of these; Ambition does not break their Sleep, nor a Niceness make them disgust their best Meals; nor are they troubled with wild and ungovernable Lust bred by Excess, and nursed by gaudy Bravery, deluding Arts, and more deluding Fancy.

NOR are the Rich more exempt from the Diseases of the Body than from the Passions of the Mind; excessive Meals, disorderly Sleeps, much

Sloth and much Wantonness, as they are the Privileges of a gay Fortune, so are they the Sources of innumerable Diseases: Scurvies, Gouts, Rheumatisms, Surseits, putrid Fevers, and I know not what are the Consequences of proud Idleness, and excessive Enjoyments, *i. e.* of ill-govern'd Wealth; whereas a plain Table and a sober Life, regular and cheap Pleasures, and moderate Labour beget and improve an entire Habit of Health, and prolong Life to the utmost Period of Nature. This is a Second great Advantage of Wealth, that it gives us a diseased Body, and a short Life.

SURE then, the Rich are the Minions of Fortune, and the Disasters which oppress the Rest of Mankind touch not them: On the Contrary, all Annals are stuffed with the Calamities and Misfortunes of these Men; rifled Wealth, defeated Hopes, baffled Ambition, blasted Honours, broken Power, and, in a Word, mighty Changes are the Argument of Tragedies, and the Subject of a loud and raving Passion: Whereas the Strokes of Fortune are soft and gentle, when they light upon the Mean; these are not capable of tragical Alterations; their Minds are of a stronger Temper, their Bodies firmer, their Senses not nice and delicate, and their little Sufferings draw not after them the mournful Pomp and State which attends the Fall, I may call it the Funeral of a great one: Here Envy insults not, Malice traduces not, the petulant Multitude do not follow the Corpse with confused Clamours and Censures: But to come closer yet, what is it that makes up the Comfort of human Life? A quiet State, faithful Friends, good Wives and good Children? If we consider it, we shall find the Life of Man little beholden to Wealth in these Points: In all Changes of Time are not the Rich the greatest Sufferers? The Mark of Envy, the

the Prey of Violence and Usurpation? Have they not more Enemies as well as more Friends than other Men? Friends did I say? They have none. They have Dependents, Flatterers, Companions and Ministers of their Pleasures, no Friends. Hence is it, that nothing is more common than for those above us to wish for the Content, the Ease and Enjoyment of those below them: For the Truth of it is, Relations which are the Pleasure of Men of middle Fortune, are the Burthen and Incumbrance of the Rich and Great: For in all their Contracts and Disposals they are Servants to their Fortune, not their Inclination. Marriages amongst these are the Matches of Estates not Minds; and therefore they attend not the Temper or the Honour of the Families they link with: Nay, what is worse, they have no Regard to their Education, or Virtue, or Wisdom: But Money weighs all down, whatever Objections are put in the opposite Scale. In the whole Method of their Lives they are Slaves to their Fortune, and to their Reputation in the World, judging themselves obliged to live not according to their Reason, but their Quality and the Humour, that is, the Folly of the Age. Nor dare they walk by any other Maxims in the Government of the nearest to them, or in the Education of their Children. In all these Things they must do what becomes Men of their Figure not what becomes true Wisdom. Who sees not now that upon the whole, there is in this Condition of Life more Incumbrance and less true Freedom: More of Shew, and less of Enjoyment than in any other?

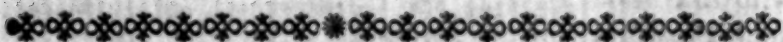
If all this be true, you will be apt to conclude Mankind is mad; if Wealth neither makes us more wise, nor more healthy, nor more free in ourselves, nor more fortunate in our Relations, what bewitches

bewitches Men into this extravagant Dotage? What makes the World gaze upon and envy the Rich, as the only happy Creatures? What makes us fawn upon them and flatter them, as the only powerful and great Things the World has? Something there is in it, and that is this, we see the Outside, the Pomp and Pageantry of Wealth, we see the gilt Coaches, the rich Liveries, the little Town of Buildings, gay Furniture, and a whole Squadron of Dishes; and together with all this, the gaudy Trappings the happy Man is bedeck'd with; the Port, the Grace, the Confidence that all this gives to Ignorance and Non-sense: But if you consider this truly, you will find all this mere Pageantry and Apparition, nothing solid nor real in it. As for gay Cloathing, it is an Advantage not worth the speaking of; it is the Pride of Children and the weakest of Women. The little Soul that converses no higher than the Looking-glass may help to make up the Shew of the World, but must not be reckon'd among the rational Inhabitation of it; serving only as Images, and Ornaments to the Stage, not Actors on it: As to all the rest, they seem to enjoy some Pre-eminence, but do not; the mean Man eats his Morsel with more Pleasure, because more Appetite; and sleeps with more Delight, because with more Ease, neither oppress'd in Body by Luxury, nor in Mind by Care: *The Sleep of a labouring Man is sweet, whether he eat little or much; but the Abundance of the Rich will not suffer him to sleep.* All the rest, as numerous Attendants, many Dependents, Flocks of Parasites, and the like, are but mere Incumbrance, the Unwieldiness of a gross and heavy Body: All these serve to increase the Noise and Hurry, the Care and the Pomp, but not the Pleasure or Enjoyment of the Wealthy: Hence was that Observation of Solomon; *If Riches increase, they are increas'd that eat them;*

them; and what Profit has the Owner thereof, *seeing the beholding of it with his Eyes?* A most extraordinary Happiness this, to be the Host of the Neighbourhood, to have one's House the Rendezvous of the Idle and the Gluttonous, of Buffoons and Flatterers; and yet if the Rich live otherwise, presently they grow infamous and stink, they are look'd upon as *Indian Graves*, where Wealth is not laid up, but lost and buried. They are loaded with the Curses of some, with the Hatred of others, and with the Censures of all; and this is almost as bad as to be pester'd with Impertinence and Flattery. This is the whole of the Matter, if People gaze and admire, it is their Ignorance; if they fawn or flatter, it is their Baseness; but still remember, it is the People, it is the Croud that doth this. Should a Man of Letters or of Spirit be over-awed by the Laws of Custom or some unhappy Necessity into the Commission of this Idolatry, he could not but despise the Idol he bow'd down to, and see it a mere Lump of Wood or Stone, notwithstanding its gaudy Dresses; tho' I acknowledge I comprehend not what can reduce them to this Piece of shameful Dissimulation; the Soul that is great in itself is so in Despite of Fortune: He that can live virtuously, can live happily in the lowest State: He that desires but little, has no Need of much: He that can despise Riches can despise the Insolence and Pride of the Rich: In one Word, he that can command himself, needs be a Slave to none.

AFTER all, I think it were possible to evince the Mischievousness of Wealth as plainly as I have its Uselessness; but that were to press the Point further than my present Design requires: For my Business was to shew, either that Fortune was not necessary

necessary to our Happiness, or as far as it is, it was in our own Power; both which I may now presume myself to have sufficiently performed.



CHAP. V.

Of FATE.

AMONGST the many Shifts and Devices Men have invented to quiet Conscience, and at once to excuse and enjoy their Lusts, this is none of the least, that they impute all to Fate, not only the Events that befall them, but even their Crimes and Follies; that is, they believe or would be thought to do so, that all our Affections and Actions, and all Events that befall us, are inevitable; that no Prudence can prevent, no Industry frustrate the Decrees of Fate, against which we struggle but in vain. This is the Fate taught first by *Democritus*, *Empedocles*, *Heraclitus* and *Leucippus*, and so derived down from Age to Age.

It is a Sign of a desperate Cause, to dispute against common Sense, and to defy the daily Experience of Mankind; and yet this the Abettors of an universal Fate (such as this is) are guilty of. For they deny that Liberty in Man which all Laws, Divine and Human, all Exhortations and Advices, all Commendation and Reproof, *i. e.* plainly God and Man suppose; for if the Mind of Man were over-ruled, if his present and future State were fix'd and determin'd by a fatal and inexorable Necessity; then as Laws, Advice and Exhortation would

would be useless and impertinent, so all Reproof and Punishment, would be unjust: And yet tho' the Assertion of Fate be oppress'd with all these Absurdities, it wants not at this Day its Maintainers; there are who maintain a Necessity in human Affairs and Events deriv'd from the Influence of Heavenly Bodies: Which Notion of Fate take in the Words of *Manilius*;

*Fata regunt Orbem, certa stant omnia Lege,
Longaq; per certos signantur tempora Cursus.
Nascentes morimur, finisq; ab origine pendet.*

AND there are others, who tho' they condemn judicial Astrology do yet maintain such eternal Degrees as imply a more inflexible Fate than any *Pagan* but *Democritus*, and those just now mentioned with him, did ever hold: Nay, a Fate more impious than that of *Democritus*, for what he imputed to senseless Matter, these do to GOD; and as much more rigid as it is more impious than his, for he never thought of another Life wherein eternal Misery should punish those Actions that were unavoidable in this.

Now the Reason why this Doctrine of Fate, is so greedily embrac'd and eagerly defended by many, is very plain; it feeds the Vanity and Curiosity of some, and the Pride of others; it is a luscious Pleasure to curious and vain Minds, to fancy themselves able to spell out and interpret the Laws of Fate, and pry into the Destinies of future Ages: It is a delicious Pleasure to the Proud, and Haughty, and Ill-natur'd, to see themselves caress'd and exalted by GOD as his particular Favourites, while the miserable Multitude, the Rest of Mankind, are excluded from the Capacity, of Happiness and Heaven; and in general it is an acceptable Opinion to the Loose and Profligate, since it is a ready
Apology

Apology for all Manner of Sins: For Men might sin confidently and without Remorse, if they did sin fatally; or rather nothing could be branded with the Infamy of Sin, when whatever Men did, were the Effect, the unavoidable Effect of Necessity, an Act of Obedience to those Fatal Laws which they could not transgress. *Tertullian* therefore speaks very properly when he saith, *Mentis malæ impetus vel Fato vel Astris imputant, nolunt suum esse quod malum agnoscunt: They impute the Heat and Sallies of their Lust to Stars and Fate, being unwilling to charge themselves with the Guilt of that which they own to be Evil.* From this little that has been said, it appears of what Importance it is, to free Mens Minds from a Persuasion so pernicious to the Interest of Virtue, the Peace of the Publick, the Happiness of Men, and the Honour of GOD.

To which Purpose, that I may contribute all I can, I will consider,

First, ON which Side stands the Advantage of Authority, whether for or against Fate.

Secondly, WHAT plain Reason, and as plain Revelation dictate in this Point.

As to the first, there are two Things material to be enquired after,

First, How far the Dominion of Fate was generally extended.

AND *Secondly*, what Kind of Necessity, or what Degrees of it were generally supposed to constitute Fate.

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As to the Extent of its Power, this one Thing is very remarkable, That the Heathens did exempt the *Mind* of Man from its Sovereignty. The Poets indeed made the Monarchy of Fate so universal, that they believed the Gods themselves subject to it. Thus *Jupiter* in *Homer* bemoans the Fate of his *Sarpedon*, which he could not prevent. But it must be remembered, that this Dominion of Fate, tho' it limited the Powers, did not necessitate the Will of their Gods. And no Wonder, for I never find that any but *Democritus* extended the Dominion of Fate over the Soul of Man. All agreed, that the Mind of Man was free, though Events were fatal: They left Man's true Happiness, *i. e.* Wisdom and Virtue in his own Power. And it deserves to be remembered, that they confined this Fatality of Events to this Life; for such of them as believed the Immortality of the Soul, did also believe that its Misery or Happiness in that State, did depend on its Behaviour in this.

THE second Thing considerable in the Notion of Fate, is what Kind of Necessity or what Degrees of it are supposed to render an Event fatal? The *Stoicks* did indeed think that the Necessity of Fate was uncontrollable, irresistible, inevitable; but I do not find that others thought such a Necessity, and nothing less sufficient to make up Fate: For they believed that Evil might be diverted by Prayers, Sacrifices, and other religious Rites, according to that of *Nemesius*, *There are no Influences, no Aspects of Stars so fatal and irresistible, but that Prayers and Expiations may sweeten and mitigate them, or else prevail with those Powers which govern them to divert their Menaces.* Besides this, the Distinction of Fate into peremptory or conditional, was very well known to the Heathens;

this last was a Fate whose Necessity depended upon some antecedent Conditions, upon some Suppositions which might or might not be fulfilled: This, *Servius* discourses largely of upon that Place of *Virgil*:

*Nam quia nec Fato, merita nec morte peribat,
Sed misera ante Diem —*

*Before her Day fell the unhappy Maid
By Love, not Fate, nor her own Crimes betray'd.*

Where he that pleases may see many Instances of this conditional Fate; and to come to an End, the Necessity of Fate in the Opinion of *Aristotle* and *Epicurus*, was not an inflexible, uncontrollable one, but one subject to Alteration, to many Impediments, being nothing else but that Efficacy in natural Bodies, which the Wisdom of Man did often prevent, the Industry and Courage of Man did often master, and Chance did often hinder and over-rule.

By all this we see plainly how careful the Heathens were, that the Necessity of Fate might not destroy the Liberty of Man; how earnestly they contended for such a Fatality of Events, as might not cancel Man's Obligation to Virtue, nor discourage him from the Expectation and Pursuit of Happiness: For now to draw to a Point, and to make some Use of this Recital of the *Pagan* Notions of Fate: If we assert a Stoical Fate, we yet leave the wise Man whatever Encouragements he can derive from the Rewards of another Life, and whatever Satisfaction he can derive from Virtue in this. And certainly though temporal Events were fatal without any Dependence upon the Choice and Actions of Man, yet even on this Supposition, Vir-
tue

tue were eligible, as that which teaches us to enjoy Prosperity, and bear bravely that Adversity which we could not prevent: But if with other Philosophers we believe not only that the Success of another Life, but even that of this too, depends wholly upon our Behaviour; and that Events are therefore only fatal, because those Decrees of God which award Happiness to the Virtuous, and Misery to the Wicked, are fix'd and immutable; then we could not desire more powerful Encouragements to Virtue, or more evident Proof that it is in our own Power to be happy. If we grant the Necessity that makes Fate flexible and mutable, or if we suspend a fatal Event upon Conditions, as it were but reasonable to imagine that all evil Ones are suspended: There will be no Reason to question whether Man's Happiness be in his own Power. If we make the Fate, which even Wisdom and Virtue cannot surmount, extend itself to some few Things; and that Fate, which drags only Fools and Sluggards in Chains after it, more general and universal, we meet with nothing in all this which can rationally deter the Industry and Hopes of any Man. If lastly, with *Aristotle* and *Epicurus*, we attribute no more Force or Strength to Fate, than to that Efficacy of natural Causes, which as we experience every Day is not irresistible (for the Mind overcomes those Inclinations we derive from natural Temper, and Life may be lengthen'd or shorten'd by Temperance or Luxury, it being a Flame which is not of itself so inextinguishable, but that it requires our Care to cherish it) then nothing is more evident than that it behoves us to act like Men, since our Reason and Virtue have their necessary Tendency and Efficacy, as well as any other natural Causes: And since the Concurrence of our Endeavours may so much more properly be supposed necessary to promote our Happiness, than the Influence of Stars,

as it has a more direct and immediate Operation upon our Affairs, than the Motion of those heavenly Bodies can have.

AND now who would expect to find that Fate in the Christian, which was banished the *Pagan* World? Who would expect that the Mind of Man should be fetter'd and bound by a more inexorable and deplorable Necessity, now in this Age of Light and Grace, than ever it was in the thickest Darkness of *Paganism*? Who could now believe that Man's eternal Success in another Life, should be as fatal as ever the Stoick believed his temporal one in this? Or who could ever imagine that Christians would charge that upon the Decrees of a wise and good GOD, which the Heathens, out of their Honour to Him, ever refused to do? For those of them who made Fate entirely the Decree of GOD, believed that in the Dispensation of Evils GOD did wholly regard Mens Crimes and Sins, that there was no other Fate attended any Man than what he was himself the Author of. And they who believed a Fatality of Events without any Dependence upon the Behaviour of Man, imputed it to Matter, not to GOD, to the Deficiency of the one, not to the Will of the other.

IT is true, such a Fate is not to be found in the Scriptures, as we shall see anon; nor is it to be found in the Fathers of the Church. We may find *Justin Martyr*, *Tertullian*, *Lactantius*, and *St. Augustine* himself, (however accused by some as a Fatalist) zealously disputing against the *Pagan* Fate: What would they have done, had there been then such a Notion of Fate as has since prevailed amongst some Christians, which is briefly this, " That the eternal Misery of Nineteen Parts of the World, (I speak modestly) and the eternal Happiness of the
Twentieth,

Twentieth, is fatal: That the Means conducing to these Ends are fatal; the one being shut up under the invincible Necessity of *natural Impotence*, the other being called and acted by *Grace irresistible*: That this Necessity of Fate is the Result of a Divine Decree: That this Decree proceeded from mere arbitrary Will, without any Regard to the Behaviour of Man." They that cried out against the *Pagan* Fate, that it subverted human Life, that it defeated all Laws, that it left Man no Use of his Reason, that it left no Place for rational Hopes or Fears, with what bitter Invectives must they have assaulted this Fate? The *Pagan* Fate left the Will free, this bound and fetter'd, not only bereaved of natural Power and Liberty, (for we contend not about that) but destitute of Grace and Divine Assistance. The *Pagan* Fate in the Opinion of a great many, if not most, did not teach a rigid and inflexible *Necessity*, this doth: They amongst the *Pagans* who taught the Necessity of Fate inexorable, understood it of *Necessity* in temporal Events; but this Fate extends it to eternal Ones. The Stoick, the great Asserter of Fate, acknowledged, nay, eagerly contended, that Man might be virtuous and happy in Despite of Fate; but these Men make human Happiness and Virtue the very Object of their Fate, making Sin and Misery, Virtue and Happiness, as fatal as any Events whatever.

IN vain now shall any one of them think to excuse their Doctrine from the Imputation of Fate, by telling us (as some do) that Fate in the *Pagan* Notion did involve GOD as well as Man within the Compass of its Necessity: That what they teach, is nothing else but GOD's voluntary Decree: This is a miserable Shift, for this doth not at all lighten the Weight of that fatal *Necessity* that lies upon unhappy Man, to think that GOD is not subject to

the same: Nay, on the quite contrary, the *Pagan* Notion was more easy to the Mind, and whilst it freed GOD from the Guilt of Man's Ruin, it frees Man from all hard and irreligious Thoughts of GOD.

*Numina cum videas diris obnoxia Fatis,
Invidia possis exonerare Deos.*

*Since heavenly Powers to curs'd Fate subject be,
The Gods you cannot but from Envy free.*

It was pure Piety in the Stoick, to impute that Fatality of Event, which he thought independent of the good or ill Behaviour of Man, to any Thing rather than to GOD.

BUT I have done. I have sufficiently considered which Way the Stream of Authority runs, and it evidently appears to be against all such Notions of Fate, as put it out of a Man's Power to be virtuous and happy, and determine his Sin and Misery wholly *necessary* and unavoidable. I will now proceed to consider,

Secondly, WHAT plain Reason and as plain Revelation dictate in this Point. Thou dost believe Fate, and therefore dost despair of Happiness; thy Sense must be plainly this, All is in the Power of Fate, nothing in thine own, nothing that can contribute to make thee virtuous or happy. Whence can this *Necessity*, this Fate proceed? There are but two Principles that were ever fancied to be the First Causes of all Things, GOD and *Matter*. Dost thou believe this Necessity proceeds from Matter, from the Motion of Atoms, or the Influence of Stars? This Belief, as St. *Augustine* argues, subverts the Foundation of all Religion: For he who believes

lieves that he depends upon Fate, not God, can have no sufficient Reason for the Worship of that God, on whom he hath no Dependence: But this is that peradventure thou wouldst have: Well, when thou art able to prove Reason and Understanding to derive themselves from endless Atoms; when thou canst find out any Kind of natural Motion of Matter or Atoms, which can be the Cause of Liberty or Freedom in the Will, any Motion that can at once be necessary (for so all Motion of Atoms must, be it of what Kind it will) and yet free too, for such all my Deliberations and all my Choices I make, prove the Motion of the Mind to be; then will I acknowledge a Fate, not only independent from, but if thou wilt, superior to God; then I will forbear all farther Attempts of Charity, as vain, and leave thee to thy Fate and Misery: But these are Notions so absurd in themselves, that no Similitudes, no Arguments, can make them appear one Jot more irrational than they do to all Men of Sense at the first Hearing.

BUT there are who suppose God the Author of all Things, and yet suppose Events fatal too: The former Opinion was ridiculous, this is impious; for suppose Mankind fatally guided by the Influence of the Stars, and that these Stars have received this Power and Energy from God, is it not natural for every Man to break out into the Words of St. Augustine, *How outrageously do these Men reproach Heaven, whilst they believe those Crimes and Villainies decreed by that august Senate and glorious Court in Heaven, which had any City upon Earth decreed, it had deserved to have been damned by the common Vote, and rased to the Ground by the united Arms of Mankind.* When I consider that the Stars are the Work of God, that their Order and Motion was prescribed by Him, that whatever Vigour and Efficacy they

they have, they have received it from Him: And then remember that GOD is a most infinitely kind and good Being; I should easily be persuaded that they could shed no Influence upon this lower World, but what were extremely beneficial to it: I could easily believe that all the Inclinations they form (if they form any) could be no other than innocent and virtuous: I can never believe that Lust or Falshood, Malice or Cruelty can come down from above; or that our Minds should be impregnated with Sin and Folly by the Influences of Heaven. No certainly, if there be any Virtue in the Stars that extends itself to Man, it must rather be the Seed of Life, and Health, and Virtue, than of Diseases, Death or Vice.

BUT this Sort of Fate, springing from the Influence of any natural Bodies, is not only repugnant to Reason, but to our Sense and Experience: For nothing is more plain than this, that any such Influence cannot affect the Mind, but through the Body: And we frequently find our Reason asserting its Power and Dominion against all the Force of the Body: Nor doth Reason only, but in every Nation, Law and Custom triumph over the strongest Inclinations of Nature. Since therefore that *Necessity* which our natural Tempers impose upon the Mind, is the utmost Fate that we can imagine to proceed from the Influence of natural Bodies, it is Nonsense to suppose that Fate insuperable or uncontrollable, which we see baffled and defeated every Day, and in every Nation.

THE Sum of those Reasons I have offered against Fate, is this, if we make GOD the Author of it, we impiously charge Him with what is repugnant to his Nature; for a good GOD cannot be the Cause of Man's Sin and Misery: If *Matter*, we ridiculously

lously suppose that what is itself senseless and inanimate should produce and govern a Being endow'd with Life, Understanding, and Liberty: If the Stars, we run again into the same Absurdities; for if they have their fatal Influence from GOD, then properly speaking, GOD is the Author, they but the Instruments of our Fate. If from themselves, then our Dependence on, and Worship of GOD, is vain; and besides we absurdly subject the Reason and the Liberty of the Mind of Man to the senseless Tyranny of Atoms. If from the Consideration of the Causes of Fate we descend to examine what our Experience teaches us, what common Sense informs us, each of them bears Witness to the Sovereignty and Liberty of the Mind of Man.

If we should come in the last Place to examine what would be the Consequences of a fatal *Necessity* over-ruling Man and human Affairs, they are such as are not only grossly contradictory in themselves, but fatal and destructive both to the publick and private Good of Mankind. It is true, were the Liberty of doing Evil taken from Man, we should have no Reason to complain; for then there would be nothing wanting to make the State of Man happy as that of Angels, but Immortality: But to bereave Man of all Power to do Good, to necessitate and compel him to be wicked, how dreadful are the Effects which must follow this? He that stains his Hands in the Blood of his Sovereign or his Parent, will accuse his Stars, not himself: He that pollutes himself in the incestuous Embraces of a Mother or Daughter, may defend his Actions as his Fate, not Choice: And how readily shall we do all that Rage or Lust invites us to, when there is an Excuse prepared for all we do? For he is no more blameable who commits the Evil which he could not help, than he is worthy of Praise who did the Good which he

he could not forbear. Were it true, that whatever Mischief Man did, he were necessitated to do; we might with more Justice arraign the Stars and Atoms, than Malefactors: And all the Instruments of Mischief would be every Jot as guilty and criminal, as the Man that used them. Were this true, we might as properly betake ourselves to Magick and Inchantments, as to Advices and Exhortations, when we would reclaim the Vicious; nor yet could the one be more effectual than the other; for what could alter what is unalterable? And for the same Reason we might forbear our Sacrifices and Prayers; since what will be, must be, and cannot be otherwise.

Define Fata Deum flecti sperare precando.

*You strive in vain with Prayers to move
The inexorable Fates above.*

REPENTANCE and Tears then may be, what *Seneca* calls Expiation, *Ægræ mentis solatia*; *The deluding Dreams of a superstitious Mind*; but could never procure any real Advantage: So that on this Supposition, what is now thought to be the only Wisdom, would be then the only Folly of a Sinner, *Repentance*.

I THINK I may conclude here; for if it be not by this Time evident, whether Reason be for or against Fate, we may justly despair of discovering what Reason dictates in this or any other Question. I will now proceed to examine,

WHAT plain Text of Scripture speaks in this Point. And here in the first Place we are to expect no other Fate than what depends upon GOD: For the Scripture makes all Things derive their Original
from

from Him, and all Things depend upon Him. There is but one Creator, and one LORD, and therefore the Creature can be subject to no Laws but such as He enacts; so that whatever Fate we now lie under, must be imputed to the voluntary Decree of GOD. Is then the eternal Ruin of Man fatal and unavoidable? If we enquire into the Original of this unhappy *Necessity*, it must be ultimately resolved into the Divine Will: When GOD then decreed the inevitable Ruin of Man, under what Notion did He consider his Ruin? Under that of *Misery*, or that of *Punishment*? If under the Notion of *Punishment*, this implies plainly, that we may thank ourselves for our Ruin: For Punishment is nothing else, but the Infliction of that Misery which our Sin and Folly have deserved. But if under the Notion of *Misery*, how can this consist with the infinite Goodness or Wisdom of GOD? Alas! How contradictory is this to Scripture? There GOD swears that *He delights not in the Death of a Sinner*; this Decree would suppose Him to delight in the Death of the Innocent: There He is represented *full of Compassion, and slow to Wrath*, even upon repeated Provocations; this Decree represents Him so addicted to Wrath and Cruelty, that He made a World on Purpose to have whereon to exercise it, and doth exercise it merely for the Delight He takes in it: The Scripture finally represents Him full of Love for Mankind, and not only not desirous that they should perish, but extremely desirous that they should be Partakers of everlasting Life; this Decree supposes Him so utter an Enemy to, and Hater of Mankind, that He made the far greater Part to no other End, but only to make them miserable.

LET any unprejudiced Person judge now, whether this be not as contradictory to the Scripture, as it

it is to Sense: Nor is it possible that any one, unless prejudiced, should look into Holy Writ, and not discern evidently that Man's Ruin is the Effect of Sin, not only wilfully and presumptuously committed, but also obstinately and impenitently persisted in: And that GOD is so far from being fond of our Sufferings and Calamities, that He is ever bewailing the Disappointment of his Love, the Defeat of his Grace and Mercy, by our Obstinacy and Impenitence: It is the Voice of his Son, it is the Voice of GOD: *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them which were sent unto thee: How often would I have gathered thy Children together, even as a Hen gathers her Chickens under her Wings, and ye would not!* If therefore we desire to know what the Will of GOD is, with Respect to Man, this is a full and plain Declaration of it; there can be no other, much less any contradictory to this. If I may not confidently rely upon this Declaration of the Divine Will, there is no revealed Truth that I can depend upon; nor can Revelation stand us in any Stead; for nothing can be asserted with greater Perspicuity, or stronger Asseveration. But I have no Scruples in me about this Matter, I have no Fears nor Jealousies of any secret Decree, or latent Will, repugnant to his declared One; I am as sure that GOD is good and true, as that He is eternal or almighty: And were He not, we could reap but very little Comfort from all other of his Attributes, how great or glorious soever.

BUT blessed be GOD, if from examining those Declarations of his Will, which GOD has made us, we proceed to examine the Manner and Method of his Government, as it relates to Mankind, (which is another, and the only Way left us to judge of his Will and Decrees) we shall find no Instance in the whole

whole Series of Divine Dispensations, which can create in us the least Suspicion of lying under an arbitrary and tyrannical Fate: Nay, if we consider the Acts of Divine Providence, we shall find the quite contrary; that GOD so governs the World, that the Issues of Things are not fatal and unavoidable, but dependent upon ourselves; that GOD is free, Man free, and the Event of Things free from any inevitable Necessity: GOD indeed is ever bound to do what is best, what is wisest, and can do no otherwise; this is the only Fate that GOD is subject to: But a Possibility of different Events is no Way repugnant to his Wisdom, Justice, or Goodness.

IN a proper Sense therefore, there is no Fate above Him, that can impose a Necessity upon Him; nor does He impose any upon Himself. If there were in any Part of his Government, a fatal and a peremptory Necessity, we should certainly find the Tracks and Footsteps of it amongst inanimate and sensitive Beings: But how great a Liberty does GOD make Use of in this Part of his Government? The Sun, whose Course seems certain and invariable as the imaginary Laws of Fate, shall, if Need be, stand Stock still, or what is more, move backward towards its East. An Instance of both we read of in Scripture, when GOD thought fit to execute his Judgments on the *Amorites*, and condescended to give *Hezekiah* a miraculous Assurance of his Mercy: The Fire shall not exert its natural Heat, but shall cease to burn and consume, and when He sees fit (as in the Case of the three Children) become as harmless as the Morning Light: The Waters shall cease to flow, as did the Red Sea, when the Army of *Israel* marched through it, and saw with Horror and Delight, the rolling Waves stand fix'd and unmov'd as the Rocks and Shores that

that bounded them; and yet what Necessity, what Fate can we conceive more immutable, whatever Connexion of natural Causes it be produced by, than that which makes the Sun move, the Fire burn, the Water flow? If we consider his Government of Kingdoms, where, if any where, the Periods and Revolutions of Misery and Prosperity should seem fatal and immutable; here again we shall find the Footsteps of unquestionable Liberty: Let us for Instance consider GOD's Government of the *Jews*, what are the Laws which God obliges Himself to observe towards them, *Lev. xxvi. 3, 4, 5, 14, 15, 16.* *If ye walk in my Statutes, and keep my Commandments and do them; then will I give you Rain in due Season, and the Land shall yield her Increase; and the Trees of the Field shall yield their Fruit: And your Threshing shall reach unto the Vintage, and the Vintage shall reach unto the sowing Time: And ye shall eat your Bread to the full, and dwell in your Land safely. But if ye will not hearken unto Me, and will not do all these Commandments: And if ye shall despise my Statutes, or if your Soul abhor my Judgments, so that you will not do all my Commandments, but that ye break my Covenant; I will even appoint you Terror, Consumption, and the burning Ague, that shall consume the Eyes, and cause Sorrow of Heart; and ye shall sow your Seed in vain, for your Enemies shall eat it. Doth not GOD here lay Life and Death, Good and Evil before them? Is not the one and the other to be the Effect of their own Choice, their own Behaviour? Are we not reasonably to suppose the *Israelites* at the Time of entering into that Covenant, whereof these are the Sanctions, as capable of Happiness as they were of Misery? What was finally the Issue of Things? The *Jews* revolted from God, and as He threatned they were harrassed and exhausted by continual Plagues and Punishments.*

WELL,

WELL, did this happen so, because it could not happen otherwise? Was this the Event, the fatal Event of Things which GOD did really *will*, and immutably and peremptorily resolve from the Beginning, notwithstanding whatever Professions he might make of his sincere Desire of the Welfare and Prosperity of that People? Let GOD Himself be the Judge, who best understands his own Mind: *O that my People had hearken'd to me, and Israel had walked in my Ways! I should soon have subdued their Enemies, and turned my Hand against their Adversaries: The Haters of the LORD should have submitted themselves unto Him, but their Time should have endured for ever.* By this, sure, if we can judge of the Meaning of GOD by any of his Expressions, we may safely conclude, not only that the Obedience and Prosperity of *Israel* were Things possible, and consequently their Disobedience and Ruin were not fatal; but also that their Obedience and Prosperity were the Things which GOD did most heartily and sincerely desire.

IF we come to GOD's Government of particular Men, we may be sure that this is of a Piece with his Government of Mankind or Kingdoms; it being nothing else but a more particular Application of those universal Laws of Wisdom, Goodness and Justice, by which He rules: An Instance of Liberty in temporal Events, we meet with in that Voyage which St. *Luke* describes, *Acts* xxvii. Verse 10. we have St. *Paul* foretelling the Fate that was like to attend themselves and their Ship, if they pursued the Voyage they had resolved on: Verse 19. we meet with the Accomplishment, in Part, of his Prediction; Darkness and Horror invades them, Seas break in upon them, and at the same Breach had Death entered, had not Divine Providence interposed in Favour, and at the Request of St. *Paul*.

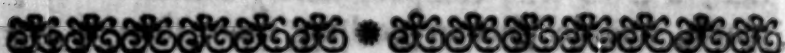
Was this their Suffering fatal? Was it unavoidable? Had they not escaped the Tempest, if they had believed *St. Paul*, and had not departed from *Crete*? Or was their Obstinacy and Unbelief as fatal as the Danger and Damage which attended it? The Expostulation of *St. Paul*, Verse 21. will easily clear this Doubt, *Ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, to have gained this Harm and Loss.* What then! Shall we think the Issues of Eternity fatal, when those of Time, wherein we are comparatively so little concerned, are free? Shall GOD not only leave us the Use of our Reason, but also assist us by the Aid of his Providence for the avoiding temporal Evils, and will He allow us neither for the avoiding of eternal Ones? Must temporal Ruin be the Effect only of our sinful Choice and Obstinacy; eternal Ruin the Effect not of Folly or Sin, but *Fate*? No surely. How often do we find GOD in the *Revelation* respiting his final Sentence, and giving Men Space and Time to repent? But they repented not; and this was their Obstinacy, not their Fate: For if Repentance had been impossible, to what Purpose did GOD allow them Time for it? That they might fill up the Measure of their Iniquity: An excellent Paraphrase! Whom shall I believe? GOD saith, He gave the Sinner Time to repent; thou sayst, He gave him Time to sin: GOD says, He gave him Time to make himself capable of Mercy; thou sayst, He gave him Time only to increase his Guilt and Punishment: How cruel are the Mercies of some Men! This is just such a Favour, as griping Usurers vouchsafe the careless Debtor, whose Fortune they would swallow up.

I HAVE now I hope dispersed those Clouds which seemed to hover over our Heads, big with Storm and Ruin; I mean those melancholy Imaginations which

which terrify the superstitious Minds of Men: We may now boldly pursue, and possess ourselves of Happiness: The Way to it is open. There is no cruel Deity, no spiteful Fortune, no inexorable Fate that will oppose us; there is no GOD but one of Love and Goodness, which moderates his Almighty Power, and tempers the Severity of his Justice; a GOD who compassionately desires our Happiness, and delights in nothing more than in promoting it: All is lightsome and chearful where He is; Perfection and Happiness dwell with Him, *in his Presence is Fulness of Joy, and at his Right Hand are Pleasures for evermore.* He scatters and dissipates Evil and Troubles by the Light of his Countenance: Death and Hell fly far from before Him, and hide themselves in their own Darkness. What can we apprehend from such a GOD as this is? How can He delight in our Misery, who is all Love? No, nothing but our Guilt or Folly can raise our Fears. We may rest secure of his Favour, if we do not despise it; nor can He ever be made our Enemy, unless we first become the Enemies of Virtue and Goodness: What then have we to fear?

THERE is no Fate but the immutable Law of GOD, that universal Law, which adjudges Happiness to the Righteous, and Misery to the Wicked: There is no Fortune but his Providence, which is nothing but the Execution of that one general Law, and the Application of its several Parts, in particular Instances: It is plain therefore, we have nothing now to fear but ourselves; if we be but true to our own Reason, and faithful to our Interest, we may confidently presume both of the Assistance and Reward of Heaven; there is therefore nothing left now to excuse us from the Guilt of our own Ruin, but only that which is wont to be objected by such

as are enslaved to some impious Lust, and groan under the Weight of those Chains which they made themselves, I mean an Incapacity of Happiness, which is the fourth Objection against the possibility of Attaining Happiness, and is now to be considered.



C H A P. VI.

Of Incapacity.

THEY who urge their Incapacity as an Objection against the Possibility of attaining Happiness, suppose Happiness to consist in Virtue, in the Pleasure that flows from it, and the Bliss that will eternally reward it: They acknowledge, could they but be virtuous, they should be happy; but they despair of obtaining such a Conquest over their Vices as may suffice to render their Life smooth, equal and steady: And preserve the Peace of their Conscience; without which it is impossible that they should be fill'd with rational Joy and Peace, or abound in a rational Hope.

THERE may be three Kinds of Incapacities, which for Distinction sake I call Natural, Moral, and Penal: Penal Incapacity is that desperate State wherein Man is by GOD immutably rejected both from Pardon and Assistance. Moral Incapacity results from the Absoluteness of that Dominion which Sin has established over Men, through a long Course of Wickedness. Natural Incapacity consists

consists in such an unteachable Stupidity of Temper, or in such violent and invincible Inclinations to Vice, or in such a Slightness, Levity and Inconstancy of Mind, as render Men utterly unfit to receive any lasting Impressions of Virtue.

I BEGIN with this first, and here I desire to be excused if I do not take upon me to mark out the distinct Bounds of Nature and Grace; These two Sisters are not like those *Chaldee* Brethren, *Abraham* and *Lot*, that were too mighty to dwell together. No, they delight to mix in loving Embraces; their Wealth and Power encreases by being united; I shall not dispute, what Power in Man is a Birth-right, what a Donative; for alas! Every Thing he possesses is a Grace, a Favour of his Prince: His Natural Abilities are so many Graces he derives from GOD, and as properly such as any Accession to them which is inspired afterwards: So that whenever I contend that any Thing is in the Power of Man, I desire to be understood of all that Power which GOD has invested him with, whether Natural or Supernatural.

DID Men vilify Nature, to beget in themselves the more profound Humility, and the more wakeful and solicitous Industry, did they magnify Divine Grace, in order to enflame their Importunity and Industry in Quest of it; This were Piety and Devotion, not Error; or however they might exaggerate the Impotence of Nature beyond strict Truth, yet this would be a safe and pious Error, as all humble and modest ones are: But when they endeavour to represent Nature vile and corrupt, on Purpose that they may the more licentiously pollute and abuse it, when they magnify and exalt Divine Grace out of a preposterous Design to justify their Neglect and Contempt of it, it is not only an Error,

ror, but a pernicious and fatal one; for he that abandons the Use of his Reason, renders himself incapable of an Heavenly Aid: GOD gives his Grace to Men, not Beasts; I must therefore oppose this Fancy, and endeavour to persuade Men, that it is in their Power to be virtuous and happy: Nor can I think this Assertion any Ways injurious to the Honour or Goodness of GOD, if it be remembered, that whatever Power I attribute to Man, I acknowledge derived from GOD. I will therefore proceed and try whether I cannot demolish this Fort which stops our Way to Happiness.

THEY who affirm a great Part of Mankind incapable of Virtue, forget that they dishonour GOD whilst they reproach their Nature: For were it so, to what End could we imagine such Men endowed with Reason and Understanding? Not to worship but defy their Maker? And was it for this End that they were made immortal too? Had GOD made Man only to take his Pastime in the World, like the *Leviathan* in the Waves, such a Soul as that which moves the Fish of the Sea, or the Beasts of the Earth, had been most proper for this End: Then might he have enjoy'd himself without Reluctancy, without Controul, without Remorse, without Shame: What can be the proper Work of a rational Creature, to which you allow not a Capacity of Virtue and Religion? 'Till you can shew me this, I can never believe that GOD should endow Man with a rational and immortal Mind out of any other Design than such a one as might become such a Being created after his own Image, which is the Practice of Holiness and Virtue. This also methinks ought well to be weighed by all who assert Man's Impotence and Incapacity of Virtue, they disparage the Gospel, and reproach Grace, as well as Man with Impotence and Insufficiency; and

and yet both the one and the other is the Power of GOD, and that in order to Salvation: Do you consider, that if you suppose Man by Nature unable to do any Thing that is good, and then utterly debar him from GOD's Grace, you introduce Fate; for what more fatal Necessity can a wretched Creature lie under than natural Impotence utterly destitute of Divine Assistance? Or if you bereave Grace of its Sufficiency, do you not understand that the fatal Necessity continues still the same? There is no Change in the Man's Condition, only in this Hypothesis Grace is dishonoured and reproached as well as Nature? And this reflects very rudely too upon GOD, it calls the Wisdom, the Goodness, the Sincerity, Power of GOD into Dispute: It is inconsistent with the Power of GOD, not to be able by his Spirit and Truth to subdue and over-power the Corruptions of Nature; it is inconsistent with Goodness, not to be willing to aid his poor Creatures, when they call upon Him; inconsistent with his Sincerity to afford them such Aid as must tend to their greater Mischief not Good; as Grace it self would, if it were only sufficient to increase their Guilt, but not to subdue their Sin: This were indeed *when a Child asked Bread to give him a Stone, and when he asked Fish to give him a Scorpion*. It is lastly, as inconsistent with the Wisdom of GOD to confer Grace to no Purpose, as it was with his Goodness to confer it to an ill one.

THESE with many others are the absurd Consequences which attend the Denial of the Universality, or Sufficiency of Grace; but if on the other Hand, we grant that GOD is ready to assist every Man who calls on Him in his Endeavours after Virtue and Happiness, and that his Assistance is sufficient to the End, for which it is designed; then we must needs acknowledge that
it

it is in every Man's Power to be good and happy: For it is no more than to acknowledge that Man can do what he can do, or which is all one, what God has put in his Power to do.

By what a Croud of Arguments might I confirm this Truth? Why are not Men good? Why are they not happy? Shall we say that God doth not vouchsafe them his Grace? Shall we impute Mens Misery to God? Shall we charge that glorious and most perfect Being with want of Compassion or Sincerity towards his poor Creatures? How easy will it be for Him to appeal to the Sufferings of his Son; to the vigorous Attempts and Endeavours of his Spirit; to Heaven and Earth stamped with the Impress of his Power and Goodness, on Purpose to teach, invite, and almost compel us to worship and obey Him; to the various Methods of his Providence contriving and pursuing our Happiness? How easily lastly, may he appeal for his Purgation to our own Consciences? And these will tell us, as they ever do, in the Distresses of our Fortune and the Approaches of Danger and Death, to what we are to impute the Cause of our Ruin.

THUS I think I have in general given a satisfactory Answer to as many as plead Natural Incapacity against the Possibility of being Happy; however that no Discouragement, no Scruple may remain, I will give a particular though brief Answer to each Part of this Objection.

THERE are three Things supposed by it to render Man naturally incapable of Virtue and Happiness. *First*, Violent and invincible Inclinations to Vice: Against this, as the most considerable Part of the Objection, the whole force of the precedent

cedent Discourse was levelled, and therefore this needs no farther Answer, only here it will be worth our remarking, That those Differences that are in the Nature and Temper of Men are not essential, but accidental; and consequently they may make the Way to Happiness more difficult to some than others, but impossible to none. The strongest Inclination to Virtue (I speak of that which is the result of Natural Temper) seems to me but a weaker Inclination to Vice, every Man has naturally a Propension to Pleasure, and consequently the sensitive Part of us to sensitive Pleasure.

THIS Tendency of the Sensitive Part is Natural to all, but in some it is more, in some less violent; unless we may say upon one Ground, it is equal in all, for the Difference of Tempers discovers itself rather in the different Kinds of Pleasure we pursue, than in the different Degrees of our Inclination to it; we are all equally allured, yet not by the same, but several Objects, so that if Lust prevail in one, Ambition as much prevails in another, and Covetousness in a Third, and in others Intemperance or Sloth: So that the Difficulty of Virtue seems much the same to all the Sons of *Adam*, the Strength of Temptation consisting especially in our Weakness; not in the Excellency of the Object we are taken with, but in our Inclination to it: Hence is it as difficult for one Man to overcome his Covetousness, as to another to overcome his Lust; and restless Ambition is as taking with some Tempers, as lazy and delicious Luxury with others: If this were well weighed, it would make us more mild and gentle in our Censure of others, and not so soft and easy in excusing ourselves. It is further worth our observing, that every Man's Virtue derives some Tincture from his Constitution and Temper, so that

that generally speaking, it is not difficult to guess a Man's Natural Constitution by the Complexion of his Religion; however Virtue ceases not to be Virtue; nor will that slight Allay of the Natural Constitution extinguish its Vigour though it behoves every Man to keep a strict and jealous Guard upon his Inclinations; (for Nature soon revives even after it has been some Time buried,) and to labour most after that Perfection, which does most contradict the particular Vice of his Constitution; for it will be otherwise morally impossible to gain a Conquest over it, and as impossible to gain a Rational Peace and Security without this Conquest.

A SECOND Thing which is supposed in the Objection to incapacitate Man for Happiness, is an unteachable Stupidity, consisting in a slow Conception and treacherous Memory: It is true indeed, the Heathen Philosophers did require in their Scholars the Knowledge of many difficult Matters, as antecedently necessary to Virtue and Happiness. All of them did with one Consent require three Things to compleat a virtuous and happy Man; Nature, Education or Instruction, and Custom. To the *First*, they attributed the Disposition to Virtue: To the *Second*, the Beginning: To the *Third*, the Easiness and Constancy; and to all three together, the Perfection of it. And hence it is that they did distinguish between perfect and imperfect, social and philosophical Virtue, and did not deem every Nature capable of that Virtue which was perfect and philosophical: But our blessed LORD and Master, the Author of the Christian Philosophy, requires no such Qualifications in those who will be his Disciples; all that He requires is, an humble and an honest Mind, freed from proud Prejudices, possessed with a sincere

cere Love of the Truth, and a sincere Resolution
 of obeying it; accordingly St. Paul observes, that
 such were most wrought upon by the Preaching of
 the Gospel: *Ye see your Calling, Brethren, how
 that not many wise Men after the Flesh, not many
 mighty, not many noble are called; but GOD has
 chosen the foolish Things of the World to confound the
 wise; and GOD has chosen the weak Things of the
 World to confound the Things that are mighty: And
 base Things of the World, and Things that are de-
 spised has GOD chosen.* Nor will any one imagine
 that acute and eminent Parts are necessary to ren-
 der a Man capable of being a Christian, who shall
 consider the Brevity and Plainness of the Christian
 Faith and Law: Doth it require a deep and pene-
 trating Judgment, or a firm and tenacious Me-
 mory, to enable us to understand or remember
 that plain and short Summary of Christian Prac-
 tice? The Grace of GOD teacheth us to deny all
 Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and to live righteously,
 soberly, and godly in this present World: Or that as
 brief and perspicuous Abridgment of the Christian
 Faith? This is Life Eternal, to know Thee the only
 true GOD, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent:
 Or that excellent Abridgment of both by St. Paul?
*Repentance towards GOD, and Faith in our LORD
 Jesus Christ.* What Stupidity of Nature can ren-
 der it an impossible Task to us to comprehend the
 two fundamental Reasons of Evangelical Righte-
 ousness; namely, the Subserviency of it to the
 Happiness of this, and of another Life, and the
 Holiness of the GOD we worship? I do not write
 this, as if I meant to represent Industry in Search
 of Divine Truths as superfluous and unnecessary;
 but to assure all of how mean Capacities soever of
 the Success of it. Our Duty is plain, and the
 Path of Duty is the most direct and compendious,
 one to the Happiness of this Life, and of another:

For nothing is so taking with GOD, as an humble Faith, devout, pure, peaceable, and charitable Religion. As to worldly Happiness, I know that a Man's own Virtue, supported by GOD's Spirit, and guided by his Truth, is the safest and the plainest Guide he can follow in dark and tempestuous Times; true Policy consists not in that Address or Subtlety of Spirit, which furnishes a Man at all Times with plausible Shifts, but in that Integrity and Virtue that needs none: This is that which will make us acceptable to all, and dear to the Wise and Good; Sights, and Tricks, and Arts may divert and entertain, but Virtues charm and captivate; those may open us the Way to Mens Houses and Tables, but these to their Bosoms, to their Hearts. The Sum of all is, great Endowments of Nature seem necessary for the Attainment of unnecessary Accomplishments; common Endowments are sufficient to make us capable of Virtue and Happiness.

A THIRD Thing, wherein the Objection supposes natural Incapacity to consist, is such a Slightness, Levity, and Inconstancy of Temper, as seems to render Men neither fit for any close Application, nor susceptible of any deep and lasting Impression: It cannot be denied but that some are of such an airy, volatile, and various Temper, that they seem to be designed for nothing serious, nothing great, as if they were the Sport, not the Work of Nature: But I have always observed that Nature makes up Defects of one Kind by Advantages of another; thus it happens here; those Constitutions which most want Strength, most partake of Softness and Tenderness; so that they are as much more apt to receive Impressions, as they are more unapt to retain them than others; like yielding Air which the gentlest Stroke doth as easily

easily divide, as it doth easily unite itself again. Now, if this be so, then the Disadvantage of this Temper is not so great as it is fancied, for though their Passions last not long, they are easily raised; and consequently, if our Addresses to such a Temper be but a little more frequently repeated, they cannot but prove successful, and such Persons by the frequent Returns of holy Passions will grow habitually devout, and their Devotion will be as steady, and more elevated than that of a slower and firmer Constitution: But after all, wherever there appears an Exuberancy of this Humour, this is to be imputed rather to their Fortune than to their Nature; a wanton Fortune, and too indulgent an Education, is generally attended with a gay, wanton and unfixed Mind. And it is true, that it is a difficult Matter for such Minds as these to attain to Wisdom and Virtue; but it is not because they cannot consider, but because they will not; let but such exchange their Haunts of Pleasure for the House of Mourning; let them but intermix the Conversation of the Wise and Serious, with that of the Giddy, Fanciful and Frolicksome, and they will soon find their Humour much corrected, and their Minds better fixed; to all this, if they could be persuaded to add the Contemplation of a suffering Saviour, of a Holy God, and a Judgment to come; and to this the Devotion of the Closet, made up of serious Reflections on these Subjects, and their own Eternity, this would soon reduce their loose and scattered Desires; it would soon recall the roving wandering Mind, and make it delight to dwell at Home in the Company of wise, devout, and important Thoughts.

AND now, I think, I have left no Part of this Objection founded upon natural Incapacity unconsidered.

sidered. Do Men complain of their Heaviness and Stupidity? Acute Parts, and a tenacious Memory are not necessary to make us virtuous or happy: Do they complain of their violent Inclinations to Sin? Reason, Custom, Faith, curb the most natural, or the most outrageous and ungovernable Appetites of Man: Do they complain of the Levity and Inconstancy of their Temper? Let them retire from the Flatteries and Caresses of a wanton Fortune, and a wanton Conversation; let them acquaint themselves with the Wise or the Afflicted, with Divine Truths and their Closets, and this will soon work a happy Change upon them: If they are too soft and delicate for the Bitterness and Severity of these Prescriptions, nothing but the much severer Discipline of Afflictions and Judgments can effect this Cure.

UNDER this Head of natural Incapacity that other Objection from moral Incapacity has been sufficiently answered, for Custom is at most but a second Nature; that Expression of the Prophet, *Can the Ethiopian change his Skin? Or the Leopard his Spots? Then may ye also learn to do Good, who are accustomed to do Evil;* is but a pathetick Exaggeration (which is usual in a prophetick Style) of the Difficulty, not an Assertion of the Impossibility of an habitual Sinner's Change; what has been done, and daily is done, can be done, and it is in vain to prove what no Man can deny; St. Paul, when he had recited a Catalogue of such Sinners as should not enter into the Kingdom of God, afterwards adds, and *such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the Name of the LORD JESUS, and by the Spirit of our GOD.* And Tertullian appeals to the Power and Efficacy of the Christian Religion visible in the Extirpation of vicious Habits, as a Proof of its
 Divine

Divine Original; nor are such Instances as these wanting at this Day. These, as they do now refute all the idle Excuses of Sinners, so will they one Day be urged in Judgment against them, to convince them that they owe their Ruin to their Sloth and Obstinacy, not their Impotence.

WHOEVER shall now reflect upon all that has been said, will easily be able to conclude, that we have no Enemy without us, none within us that can necessitate us to be miserable; Misery may be our Choice or Punishment, it can never be our Fate: Our natural Corruption may invite and incline us, but can never force and compel us to be wicked: For there is no Temptation, no Inclination, which GOD's Grace and our Industry are not able to resist and overcome; so that now there remains no other Incapacity of Happiness than what is penal, which is the next Thing to be spoke to.

PENAL Incapacity consists in GOD's final and immutable Rejection of Man from Grace and Pardon. On this, all that is necessary to be observed here, is, *First*, that this State of final Rejection from Grace and Pardon is penal, a State to which nothing but Mens voluntary Transgressions can betray them, and those too Transgressions of the deepest Guilt, and most crying Aggravations; for surely nothing less can provoke a GOD, *who delights to exercise Loving-kindness and Mercy*, a GOD of infinite Long-suffering and Patience, to pass a Sentence of eternal Ruin and Damnation upon any of his Creatures. *Secondly*, That no mistaken Fancies of the Unpardonableness of our State may tempt us desperately to renounce GOD, our Saviour, and Virtue; it behoves us to consider what ought to be the proper

Influence of this Persuasion that there is such a penal State on this Side the Grave.

First, If they who believe such a State will act consonant to their own Opinion, they must not allow themselves in a Course of wilful Sin, lest they be insensibly betrayed into that dreadful State.

Secondly, SINCE Impenitence and Hardness of Heart is an inseparable Consequence of that dreadful Sentence which excludes Men from Grace and Pardon; no Man can rationally conclude himself in this State, 'till he has made all possible Attempts to recover himself from his Sin, and that without Success: And because,

Lastly, No Man can conclude his Endeavour unsuccessful, 'till Death surprize him in an impenitent State; for habitual Sinners have become eminent Saints, and lapsed Christians, nay Apostates, have not only recovered their former State, but redeemed their Crimes by more than ordinary Degrees of Repentance, Devotion, and Charity. Therefore no Man must give over his Attempts of subduing his Corruptions, while God continues him in the Land of the Living: These Rules, if observed, will, I question not, render the Persuasion of such a penal State, as the Objection supposes, very profitable and useful to some, and not pernicious to the eternal Interest of any.

HAVING thus cleared my Assertion, That Happiness is attained here, from such Objections as seem to derive any Countenance from Reason; there remain but two more that I can think of, the one whereof presses hard upon me, under a pretended Authority of Revelation, the other urges the

the Experience of Mankind ; I will begin with the former, and consider with what Aspect Revelation regards the Happiness of this present Life, and whether there be any Thing in it that forbids the Hopes, or obstructs the Attainment of it.



C H A P. VII.

Religion is no Enemy to our present Happiness.

IF Men were not very ingenious in framing Excuses of their Folly, and in the Contrivance and Pursuit of Ruin, it would seem very strange that the Gospel which was designed to be the great Instrument of our Happiness, should be alledged to discourage and damp our Endeavours after it; that the Gospel whose great End is to fill our Minds with Joy, Peace and Hope, should be traduced as an Enemy to our Pleasure; but so it is, and therefore resolving to leave no Obstacle unremoved, I will examine this Fancy. Religion ever had, and always must have the Character of its Author visibly stamped upon it; nothing that is not infinitely kind, and infinitely wise, can be found in any Part of Revelation truly divine, from whence we may rationally conclude, that the great Aim of GOD in establishing Religion is to advance the Happiness of Man, and to advance it in a Method consonant to those natural Principles He has implanted in him: Nor did any one inspired Author ever think otherwise; *He that keepeth the Law (saith Solomon) happy is he. Great Peace have they that love thy Law, and nothing shall offend them: Happy is the Man that findeth Wisdom, and the Man that getteth Understanding.* That this was to be understood of present Happiness, is
apparent

apparent from what follows, *Length of Days are in her Right-hand, and in her Left-hand Riches and Honour. Her Ways are Ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace. She is a Tree of Life to those that lay Hold upon her.* And though the Gospel as a higher and more perfect Dispensation doth propose to us as our great End, Life, and Immortality, yet it doth by no Means exclude us from Happiness here; but rather establishes it upon proper and firm Foundations. *Peace I have with you, my Peace I give unto you, not as the World gives, give I unto you; let not your Heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Now the Fruit of the Spirit is Joy, Peace. Now the GOD of Hope fill you with Joy and Peace in believing, and make you abound in Hope thro' the Power of the Holy Ghost. Godliness is profitable to all Things, having Promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come.* Nor can I, indeed, conceive how the State of a righteous and holy Soul should be other than a happy one: The confident Expectation of Heaven must needs be more transporting than the richest Fancy of a Sinner, and that Security both in Respect of this and a future Life, which a good Man enjoys in the Protection of GOD, and the Assurance of his Favour, must infinitely exceed any Thing that a Sinner, can attain to, and must exclude those uneasy Fears which frequently interrupt the Sinner's Enjoyment; and overcast his Hopes: He that loves GOD and Virtue, cannot but be happy in the daily Practice and Enjoyment of what he most delights in: And he, lastly, that hath subdued his Passions, and overcome the World, cannot but reap the daily Fruits of so glorious a Conquest, and be constantly entertained with pleasing Reflections and delightful Prospects; and, yet, if he should enjoy nothing else, that Liberty, Magnanimity, Divine Charity, and Enlargement of Soul, which he thereby gains, were

were an abundant Reward of this Victory. The Sum of all is this ; a good Man has the best Title to the Blessings of this Life, and the Graces of another, he enjoys this World with as great Security, as Wisdom and Moderation, and has an assured Hope of a far better when he quits this ; the Anticipations of which by Faith, Love, and Hope, do at once facilitate and confirm his Conquest over all unworthy Lusts, and entertain him with inexpressible Satisfaction and Pleasure.

BUT what becomes now of the Doctrine of the Cross ? This is a very soft and mild Commentary upon that of our Saviour, *If any Man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross and follow Me.* This is not so formidable an Objection, as it must at first Sight seem ; for doubtless the Pleasures even of Confessors and Martyrs did far outweigh their Sufferings whilst they lived ; and when they suffered Death itself, the Time was come to exchange temporal for eternal Happiness : I think then the Death of Martyrs and Confessors, is rather a great Confirmation than Confutation of this Opinion : Teaching us plainly that in Despite of all Calamities, it is not only possible to live, but to die happily. From this little I have said on this Occasion, it is easy to shape an Answer to what is objected from St. Paul, *If in this Life only we have Hope in Christ, we are of all Men most miserable ;* it is indisputable true, that had these Christians been destitute of that Hope which was their Support, they had sunk under the Weight of such Sufferings, and so had been most miserable of all Men : But since their Hopes did not only support them under their Afflictions, but also render them more than Conquerors ; all that can follow hence is, that the Resurrection and eternal Life are unquestionable Truths, and that he who believes them as firmly

as the Confessors and Martyrs did, may like them be happy, though a thousand Seas of Calamities and Troubles should break in upon them.

As to Mortification, which is a Duty of perpetual Obligation, (for the Purity of Religion is still the same) this did at first signify the Renunciation and Extirpation of *Jewish* and *Pagan* Lusts, according to that of St. Paul, *Mortify therefore your Members which are upon the Earth; Fornication, Uncleanneſs, inordinate Affection, evil Concupiſcence, and Covetouſneſs which is Idolatry;* it ſtill ſignifies the ſame Thing, and whatever Difficulty we are to encounter in the Performance of this Duty, it muſt be vanquiſhed, for it is impoſſible to be wicked and happy: A wicked Man is his own Hell, and every Paſſion, every Luſt is a Fiend, a Fury that doth outrage and torment him; and all this the Heathens themſelves did not only conſtantly acknowledge, but alſo paint out with as lively Eloquence as any Chriſtians could ever do: Their Experience, (over whom Sin had an uncontrolled Dominion) moſt effectually convincing them of the Outrages, Tyranny and unſpeakable Miſchiefs of wicked and abominable Paſſion; nay, ſo manifeſt is it that the ſubduing theſe irregular Paſſions is neceſſary to our Happineſs, that even the *Epicureans* themſelves (notwithſtanding their conſining the Happineſs of Man to this ſhort Life) did yet look upon themſelves as extremely injured by *Tully*, and others, when they repreſented them as revolted from, and Enemies to Virtue. It is not my Buſineſs here to examine what Foundation for Virtue their Philoſophy could leave, it is enough that they could not but acknowledge it as neceſſary to Happineſs.

To come to a Conclusion, the Scripture is so far from denying, that it affirms the Possibility of attaining Happiness; nor are the Sufferings of Confessors and Martyrs, or the Doctrine of Mortification inconsistent with the true Happiness of Man: That Affliction is not, the Example of those very Martyrs and Confessors triumphing over it does sufficiently evince; that Mortification is not, is unanimously confessed, even by such as were entirely devoted to the Pleasures of this Life. I have now spoke to all those Objections which oppose the Possibility of attaining Happiness, with any Shew of Reason, or Pretence of Divine Authority: It is now high Time I should proceed to answer those who oppose not Reasons, but Observation and Experience.



C H A P. VIII.

Of Matter of Fact or Experience.

AFTER all the Pains I have taken to shew that the Search after Happiness is a rational Undertaking: To demonstrate the Possibility of attaining it, and to disperse all Objections to the contrary, there remains still one Objection, which if true, were sufficient to discourage the Endeavours of the most virtuous. Which is this:

IT is true, Happiness may be found in Speculation, but rarely if ever in Possession: The Number of the Happy is extremely small; and most Men if not all, when they have worn Life to its last Period, may give that Account of it which the aged Patriarch did to *Pharoah*, *Few and evil have the Days of the Years of my Life been.*

HAPPINESS I

HAPPINESS! What is it? Or where is it? In what distant Coasts or unknown Regions does it dwell? Who and where are the Darlings of Heaven to whose Lot it happens? Shall we like *Bajazet* think poor, silly, lazy Peasants happy? O happy Shepherd who hadst neither *Sebestia* nor *Orthobales* to lose: As if secure Beggary and slothful Want were Happiness; happy thus might I call the Man born blind, he has no Eyes to lose.

OR shall we call the gaudy Swarm which (like Flies and Insects in Gleams of Sun-shine) buzz and flutter in the Rays and Warmth of Prosperity? Shall we call these happy? Ah! These are they which furnish Theatres and Poets with tragic Stories: Amongst these, restless Passions, contemptible Levity, ungovernable Insolence, withered and meagre Envy, wandring Lust, empty Pride, loud and senseless Confidence, and finally, shameful and fearful Sins have their Abode: And can we call those happy who are infested with such Legions of Evils? They are their own Burden whilst they are other's Envy.

SHALL we then call the busy, trading World happy? These would have thought it a Happiness not to have needed to trade or toil, they love Wealth, but most admire

Res non parva labore sed relicta.

*Not Gold they labouring dig themselves in Mines,
But what the toiling Ancestor resigns
To his more happy Issue.*

If this be so, one would think I might boldly present you with the envied Glory of mighty Princes, as an unquestionable Instance of Happiness: But
alas!

alas ! The wisest of the Heathen Gods preferred the Happiness of *Aglaus* before that of *Gyges* ! And the wisest of Men (in his Times at least) preferred the Happiness of *Tellus* before that of *Cræsus* ! And this Sentence seems not only to deny those particular Princes happy, but also to pronounce the very State of Royalty incapable of Happiness ; indeed this State when active and glorious is full of Fears, and Cares, and Hazards ; when sluggish and unactive full of Shame ; what can be the Happiness of a State too big for Friendship or for Pleasure ? For Love is the Business and Enjoyment of Equals ; Obedience is all Subjects can offer, or Monarchs receive : All higher and nearer Approaches to the Throne are but Intrusions of Ambition and Design ; nor can I possibly discern what Satisfaction the great Mortal can take in any Expressions of Duty or Affection, which he can never distinguish from the Fawning and Flattery of those who in their Hearts despise and hate him : How shall he know that any truly love him, when none dare slight him ? Or how shall he discern who serves him out of Duty, where every Man even obtrudes himself upon his Commands out of Interest ? In a Word, the Passions of a Prince are so much greater than other Mens, as is his Mind and Fortune ; his Conversation is not with the Minds of Men, but with Faces, or rather Masks and Disguises. And as to his Pleasures, his Gust of them is very flat, being cloyed and surfeited by his Affluence. And whereas all other Men, as the Ambitious, the Vain-glorious, the Covetous, the Lover seem to rise above themselves in the Acquisitions of those Pleasures they aspire to : The Monarch debases himself, descends and stoops below his Fortune to meet his. And yet I am not of *Apollo's* nor *Solon's* Mind, I cannot think there is any great Happiness

in the Ignorance and the Quietness of a labouring Cottager.

I WOULD have my Tranquillity spring not from the Ignorance, but Reason, of my Mind ; from the right Government of my Passions, not from the Meanness of my Education or Fortune. For the same Reason I do not call Men happy, whose slow and easy Temper, like the Waters of the Dead Sea, is not to be moved even by Wind or Storm : I do not call Stupidity a Calm, the Soul that is insensible of Trouble, is so of Joy too ; whoever is incapable of any deep Impression, is so of any serious Reflection, and what is the State of such a Man ? I would not have my Life pass by like a Dream, whilst fleeting or imperfect Images of Things do scarce awake, and too slightly affect my drowsy or dazzled Sense.

WHOM then shall we call happy ? Surely if any, the Knowing and Learned : These are the Souls that converse with Heaven, that dwell continually in the pure Light, and feed upon the Bread, the Joys of Angels. But alas ! if Happiness were the inseparable Companion of Learning, how came the adored *Cato* to be led by Pride and Humour and Vain-glory through burning Sands and dreadful Desarts ? How came he in a Mood of desperate Discontent to die his own Murderer ? Whence was it that the learned and eloquent *Tully*, after so many brave Discourses of the Contempt of Death and Pain, and briefly all human Evils, did sink so poorly under the Weight of his Misfortunes ? If Learning did put Men in Possession of Happiness, why was our *Verulam* so utterly a Stranger to Happiness in both Fortunes, as unable to govern and and enjoy Prosperity aright, as to bear up under Adversity ? If Learning were so sovereign an Antidote

tidote against Misery, if Philosophy were such a Paradise, why do the Learned leave their sacred Shades to haunt the Houses of great Ones, or the Courts of Princes? Why do they fawn and cringe, and with all imaginable Affiduity, labour to insinuate themselves into such Men whose Esteem for them is a just Scandal to them, and their Favours but so many publick Marks of Reproach? O vilest Servitude! And yet after all, even this equals not the Baseness, the Slavery of those who prostitute themselves to the Multitude, and make an ignorant and insolent Herd the arbitrary Sovereigns of their Principles, their Liberty, their Happiness, for this depends upon their Popularity. O how far should I prefer the independent Drudgery of an honest Mind, before this unmanly Servitude!

THE Men then whom I call happy, are such, as are possessed of true and solid Goods, and those such as Fortune cannot give nor take away; such were *Christ* and his Apostles, and such are all those at this Day, as are transformed into the Glory and Image of the Divine Nature by the Energy of the Divine Spirit and Divine Truths. Let us consider therefore what the State of *Christ* and his Apostles was in this Life: I will not take Notice of those ecstastick Pleasures, which they felt when they did those Godlike Works which we call Miracles. What Triumph could be equal to theirs, who saw Diseases, Devils, and Death, subject to their Commands? What Joy could be equal to theirs, when they gave Life to the Dead, Sight to the Blind, and Strength to the Lame? To what a Height were Wonder and Delight raised in each of these Performances? For nothing could be more wonderful than the Power, or delightful than the Charity conspicuous in them: But this I pass over, because this Power is not to be attained by us:

Let us come to that which is, I mean the Virtues of *Christ* and his Apostles; *He had not a Place to lay his Head*; it his true, but how truly great was He in Himself? How much above the mean and unmanly Desires of Ambition, Covetousness, or Lust? He indulged Himself in no sensual Pleasures, it is true; but how calm that Soul, which no angry or envious Passion disturbed, where nothing but sacred Love dwelt? The Love of God, the Love of Man, and the rational and wise Love of Himself? How happy that Soul which was illuminated with Divine Knowledge, supported by an unshaken Faith, filled with joyful Reflections and glorious Hopes? That Soul which in the Silence of the Night, and the Retirements of the Mount, did pour forth itself in Prayers and Hallelujahs; that Soul which full of God and full of Heaven, had no Room for uneasy Cares? It is true, our Saviour met Death with pale Looks and Pangs of Soul; but it is as true, that his Faith surmounted his Fears; his Agony endured but for a little While; an undisturbed Peace, and a settled Serenity of Mind followed it, and his Trouble and Pain in Death, like the Eclipse that attended, did but overcast the Light within; not extinguish it: Who could finish the last Act of Life with more humble Majesty, or with more settled Peace? In the Life and Death of our dear LORD we behold that of his Disciples, for they were all Followers of Him, as they desired we should be of them: What can be happier than their State here was? Their Life was regular, their Joy steady and rational, their Love of GOD vigorous, their Charity to Man fervent and diffused; their Desires, as to the World, modest; their Minds resolved and brave in Afflictions, chearful and composed in Death itself.

LET

LET it stand then as an unshaken Truth, that Happiness may be attained in this Life: For what the Followers of our LORD attained to, that may we; their natural Passions and Infirmities were the same with ours, our Trials and Temptations are less than theirs; we serve the same GOD, we are guided by the same Truths, supported by the same Power, elevated by the same Hopes; we have the same Peace bequeathed us, the same Spirit, the same Heaven promised us, and we march under the Conduct of the same Captain of our Salvation, who by his *Death has abolished Death, and brought Life and Immortality to Light.*

To look back now upon this whole Section, and sum up the Substance of it: GOD who made us, made us on Purpose to be happy; for what other Design could infinite Love propose to itself in our Creation? And proposing to Himself this End, He endowed us with Faculties and Capacities that might fit us for the Contemplation and Enjoyment of Himself, and his Works: The World provided by him for our Entertainment, He filled with all Things that could minister either to our Necessities or Delight: Here GOD has planted us, not as Inhabitants but Sojourners; for this is but our State of Probation. Angels had their Times of Trial, so have Men; here He would have us aspire after that Life Angels lead in Heaven, for we are one Day to be equal to them: Here He would have us learn and practise those Virtues which fit us for the Society and Enjoyment of that Kingdom wherein dwells Righteousness; for the Consummation of all our Endeavours, Desires and Hopes: But when we make Heaven the Abode, the Seat of perfect Happiness, we do not thereby suppose that it is banished from Earth; rather on the contrary, if that State be the Consummation of all

Things, it is necessary to be concluded, that every Step we advance nearer to it, we mount and ascend higher, into brighter, calmer, and purer Regions: Heaven is like a glorious Building, whose Access is full of Delight and Beauty; for as that Youth which precedes our Manhood, has its Sweetness, its Beauty, its natural Perfection and Pleasure; so has this mortal State which precedes our Angelical, its proper Degree of Perfection and Blessedness: And this is no small one neither. When our Mind, filled with Divine Charity, becomes free, generous, resolved, constant, chearful, meek, gentle, devout, heavenly: When it has so familiarly acquainted itself with Heaven, that the Sins and Pleasures of the sensual Part of the World look like the Manners and Entertainments, not only of a foreign but barbarous Country; and when *lastly* by its frequent Retirements from the Body, and daily Commerce with rational and spiritual Pleasures, it not only asserts its Sovereignty over it, but begins to live so independent of it, that at the last when it shall in Death mount up upon the Wings of pure Flame to Heaven, it shall not suffer as if the Body needed to be torn from it, but shall let it fall, as *Elijah* did his Mantle. Those Complaints therefore which we make against our present State, and those Reproaches with which we vilify our Nature, are false and unjust, for we are by GOD created and designed for Happiness; and this Happiness, GOD hath been pleased to put in our own Power, to place within our Reach: We lie under no Necessity, no Fatality, but what our own Vices betray us to; nor do we stand in Need of the Indulgences of Fortune, the Tranquillity and Pleasure of a virtuous Man is an Image of GOD's own; it springs from within, nor from without. It is true there are Difficulties which obstruct our Progress to Happiness;

ness; but they are such as all wise and good Men have conquered: It is true, Nature labours under its Infirmities, that is, sensual Propensions and Inclinations; but it is strengthened and supported by Reason, by Revelation, by Grace: We may fall, it is true, a Sacrifice to GOD's Wrath, but it must be after we have lived long in Contempt of his Mercy, and obstinate Defiance of his Grace. Methinks these Considerations should raise and exalt the Mind of Man; they should inspire us with Desires and Hopes worthy of rational and immortal Souls; like the *Israelites* when they marched out of *Ægypt*, we should dream of nothing but Triumph, Glory and Happiness.





S E C T. III.

*The Causes and Remedies of Man's Un-
successfulness in his Pursuit of Happi-
ness.*

C H A P. I.

*The general Cause of Ill Success. Deviation
from Reason, the general Cause of Man's Ill
Success. The Effects of which are, 1st,
The Proposal of false Ends, 2dly, Coldness
in Pursuit of our true Ends.*

BUT if this be true, that Happiness is attainable, and if it be as true, as certainly it is, that there needs no Eloquence to enkindle in any Man the Desires of Happiness, or to spur him on to endeavour its Attainment, all Mankind being carried on towards it by natural, and therefore constant and passionate Inclinations; will it not be natural to demand, whence is it that so few are happy? Whence is it that Misery and Trouble, Affliction and Sorrow fill almost every place and every Bosom? Not only no Kingdom or City, but no Town, no Village, no Family, being exempt

empt and free; no Place or Person is privileged against Grief and Trouble, it invades the Tribunal of Judges, the Thrones of Princes, and what is almost as sacred as either, the Retirements and Closets of the Devout and Learned; nay, scarcely is the Church and the Altar a secure Sanctuary against it:

THIS will not be difficult to comprehend, if we soberly consider the true Causes of Man's Misery; I shall Discourse of them here only generally and briefly, as the Nature of an Introduction requires.

MANY are the particular Causes of Human Misery, but they may all be reduced to this universal and immediate One, namely, *That we do not live conformable to our Reason.*

—————*Quid enim Ratione timemus aut cupimus*—————

WHEN do our Affections spring from, or when are they governed by Reason? When are our Desires or Fears, our Joys or Sorrows wise, and just, and holy? How frequently are our Actions, nothing else but the brutish and blind Sallies of foolish Passions, and our Lives nothing else but the Wandrings and Rambles of deluded Imaginations? How commonly do we act what we ourselves condemn? And how commonly doth the whole Course of our Lives displease ourselves as much as others; and yet we live on in Contradiction to our Reason, and sometimes to our Inclinations too: But in nothing does our Deviation from Reason more evidently appear than in two Things:

First,

First, In proposing to ourselves false and irrational Ends of Life; and *Secondly*, In our Insincerity in pursuing the true and rational one, that is Happiness. As to the *First*, who sees not how the Life of Man is perverted; the Tendency of Nature crook'd and bow'd to Designs utterly unsuitable to the Capacities and Faculties of a rational Mind, and to the great End of our Creation? Who can look into the Life of Man, and not easily conclude that his chief Aim is Wealth and Greatness, not Happiness? Or which is something sillier, that his Design is some unnecessary Accomplishment, not Virtue and Goodness, or a vain Esteem and popular Applause, not the Peace and Wisdom of his Mind? Who sees not how greedily Men pursue those sensual Satisfactions, which naturally tend to enslave the Soul, and to extinguish the rational Pleasure and Vigour of our Minds? In a Word Wealth, and Honour, and Power, and Pleasure, are the Idols of Mankind, these are the Things for which they live, for which they love and value Life: These are the glorious Possessions which enflame our Industry; these are the Things which the unfortunate Man envies, and the fortunate honours, these are the Things which distinguish Mankind into their several Ranks and Degrees, the Contempt or Esteem of the World, being ever proportion'd to the Degrees of Wealth and Power, which they fancy others possessed of. To these noble Ends the sage and experienced Parent trains up his young Ones, instilling daily into them all the Maxims of Covetousness and Ambition, and judging of their Proficiency and Hopefulness by the Progress they make towards these Ends, that is, the more enslav'd they are, the more hopeful, the more promising is their Youth.

NOR are Men more zealous in pursuing the false, than cold and insincere in pursuing the true Ends of Life, Virtue, and Happiness. This is too Evident to any one who shall consider how fond we are of our Diseases, and Errors; how impatient of that Instruction or Reproof which tends to cure, undeceive and disabuse us; how sluggish we are in the Study of important Truths, how listless and remiss in the Use of those Means which conduce to Virtue, to the freeing our Minds, and to the confirming our Resolutions: And therefore lastly how light, wavering, and unconstant, we are in the Practice of those Things which right Reason convinces us to be our Duty.



C H A P. II.

The particular and immediate Cause of Ill Success.

ALL that I have said in the former Chapter is plain and evident, we see and feel it, and bemoan it, but yet we live on in the same Manner still; whence therefore is this Infatuation of our Understanding that enslaves us to false and irrational Ends? Whence is that Impotence of Mind; whence is that Insincerity that deludes our Desires, and produces nothing but feeble and unsuccessful Endeavours? Neither is this a difficult Matter to discover; that we live and act irrationally proceeds evidently from *Three Causes: First, The Frame*
of

of our Nature. *Secondly*, A vicious Education. *Thirdly*, Vicious Conversation.

THE *first* Source of Irrational Desires and Actions is the Composition of our Nature: Our sensual and brutish Appetites have their Foundation in our natural Constitution as well as our rational Affections; Hence is it that there is in Man a doubtful Fluctuation and Indetermination to different Objects, the Reason of the Mind, and the Appetite of the Body distracting and dividing him by their different Proposals. The Impressions of Sense and Representations of Reason successively awakening in him very different Desires: Whereas Angels by the Perfection, and Beasts by the Imperfection of their Nature are confin'd to their proper and necessary Objects; Man is left to a strange Uncertainty, undetermined by the Reasons of the Mind, or the Instinct or Appetite of the Body, moved indeed successively by each, perfectly governed and over-ruled by neither. But it were well for Man that the Inclinations of these two different Principles were so justly pois'd, that he were naturally left in a true Liberty and pure Indifference, equally able to follow the Dictates of Reason, and the Appetites of Flesh and Blood: But alas! How impetuous are the Lusts of the Body! How irresistible are those Passions which the Objects of Sense, aided by a carnal Imagination, raise in us! On the other Side, how cold are the Representations of Reason, when we most need its Assistance and Authority! How faint and feeble the natural Inclination of the Soul to what is truly good and great! How remote and distant the Rewards of Virtue, and consequently how weak and cold their Influence, and how faint and imperfect is the Pleasure that attends it, abstracted from future Rewards, in all other Minds besides those who are arrived in

in some sort at Perfection ! It is true, at some Seasons, the Remonstrances of Conscience are so sharp, its Reproaches so bitter, the Confusion of the Mind, so unsufferable, that they render that which is a Pleasure to the Sense, a Torment to the Soul, and its agreableness to our Imagination cannot make amends for its Contradiction to our Reason. But alas ! These are but short-lived Fits ; for Business diverts, Pleasure enchants, and repeated Violence offered to our Reason stupifies and deadens the natural Conscience, and what is worse than all this, a silly and vicious Education does generally so corrupt our Judgments, and prepossess us with vain and foolish Affections, that the Checks of Conscience are extremely seldom and extremely faint, unless the Commission of some gross Sin awaken it by a deep and deadly Wound. This is,

2. A SECOND Cause of that general Apostasy from Reason so notorious in the World, A silly and vicious Education. How well does it fare with Children when they derive only their Original Corruption from their Parents ? Ah ! How often are their weak Dispositions to Vice nursed and cherished by their Parents into an absolute, uncontrollable, and settled Tyranny. Nay, what is worse yet, how often are those towardly Dispositions which many bring into the World with them choaked and stifled, not only by the Indulgence, but even by the Example and Authority of Parents ?

WHEN corrupt Inclination is ripen'd into a second Nature, when our innate Weaknesses and Follies are confirm'd by those false Principles, and that vicious Confidence which we derive from Education, then we are sent into the World, left

to our own disposal, abandoned to our own Government; Poor Creatures! Not only exposed, unarmed, unguarded, to Temptations, but like *Sampson* to the *Philistines* tied and bound too: Ah! Could we so easily burst our Bonds as he did his! But whence should we recover our lost Liberty?

CONVERSATION, instead of being an Assistance to us in our Endeavours after Happiness, doth generally tend to promote our Misery; Philosophy is not now the business of Conversation, nor is Friendship any Way serviceable to the great End of Life: The Ligament of Society is Riot and Revelling, or sordid Profit and Interest, or peradventure Folly, Trifling, and Impertinence: These are the Ties and Bonds of our Confederacies; so that whatever Authority our Friends and Acquaintance have over us, is employed to no other Purpose but to recommend and endear Vice to us, to render it, if not beautiful, at least less deformed than it is: Hence it is that Retirement is so generally recommended to those who design to make any Progress in true Wisdom, and that such as are truly virtuous, so passionately complain of the Disadvantages they suffer by Conversing with the World: For the Truth is, Wisdom and Goodness are such unfashionable Themes of Discourse, such unusual, nay, I may add, unwelcome Subjects of Entertainment, that the Company deserves now to be praised, which is only barren and unprofitable, not hurtful, and wherein we suffer no greater Loss than that of our Time.

It is now easy to imagine what Fruit a corrupt Nature must bring forth, when not only left destitute of necessary Cultivation, but depraved yet more by a vicious Education, and vicious Conversation; what can all these together bring forth

forth, but a loathsome Brood of Diseases and Vices, such as these, Rashness, Precipitancy, Heedlessness, and Unthoughtfulness, false Notions, Ungovernableness and Importence of Will, Insincerity, Levity, and Inconstancy, which are the Plagues of human Life, and the fatal Obstacles of our Tranquility? For either they obstruct our true Happiness by preventing our Search after it; or de-lude our Search by perverting our Understanding; or else they frustrate the Influence of its Discovery by obstinate Reluctances in the Body, and an unhappy Impotence in the Mind: All this is manifest upon the most transient Glance we can take of these Particulars. To begin with Want of Consideration: This is a necessary Effect of that Corruption which I have ascribed to Nature, Education, and Conversation; the Body unaccustomed to obey is impatient of Deliberation when its Pleasure is in View, and a taking Imagination over-rules whatever weak Plea Reason makes: Nay, what is worse, the very Disuse of Reason in Men abandon'd to the Conduct of Custom, and swayed by the Enticement of Inclination, and Authority of Example, bereaves them almost of the Faculty itself: So that their Life and Actions are not the Effects of Judgment and Deliberation; but injudicious, unweigh'd Custom; or more rash, heedless, and precipitant Passion. And can any Man think, that when the meanest Art or Profession is not learn'd without right Instruction or just Diligence, Wisdom the great Art of living happily, should be attained without so much as just Consideration? When a Man cannot grow rich or prosperous without Contrivance and Industry, is it probable he should grow happy by Inadvertency and Chance? It is impossible. For innumerable will be the false and pernicious Notions which such a one corrupted and de-

praved, rash and unadvised must be betrayed into, and confirmed in. There is no Principle so false, no Practice so absurd which such do not readily entertain: Hence it is, that Men do so generally live by Rote, that Men's Principles are the fashionable ones of the Neighbourhood or Nation, that their Manner of Life takes that Shape which their Rank and Quality, and the Chance of their Conversation gives it: And their very Religion itself is the Native Commodity of the Soil they are planted in; hence it is finally, that Men are unrighteous and wicked, careless and unconcerned, notwithstanding all the Calls or Invitations, all the Rewards and Menaces of the Gospel, Convictions of Conscience, Impulses of Grace, Mercies, Threats and Judgments of GOD: And Covetousness, Luxury, Uncleaness, Prophaneness, Ambition, are as constantly practised in Court and City, as condemned in the Pulpit and Press; nor is it to be expected otherwise, for false Notions give Countenance and Authority to our Follies, and fortify us in all our wretched Miscarriages against the Assaults of Law and Reason, of Conscience and GOD Himself: No Condition is so desperately forlorn as that of Sin and Folly, backed and authorized by inveterate Principles! These render our very Industry not only useless but even fatal and destructive to our Happiness: These defeat the very Tendency of our Nature towards Happiness, and turning it into a wrong Channel, make it run with Violence towards our Misery.

THESE help to render our Passions both numerous and ungovernable, by presenting some Things as Evils which are not, and by augmenting real Evils beyond their natural Proportion: And herein consist the very Essence and Being of human Misery, or at least a Part of it, when our own Folly increases

increases both the Number and Weight of Evils, and our numberless Passions exceed all just and natural Bounds: And this is a constant Truth, the less Understanding there is in any Man, the more violent is his Passion, the Passion of a Fool being like the Zeal of a Bigot, the more blind, the more furious.

INSINCERITY is another Fruit of the Corruption of our Nature, and the Depravation of Education and Conversation. This is that which makes us lazy in our Search after Truth, and partial in the Examination of our Opinions and Actions; for when the Bent of our Nature runs towards carnal Pleasures, and this is confirmed by Education and false Notices of Things, we shall be apt to take up and caress ourselves with present, easy, and ready Entertainment. We shall not extend our Care or Prospect very far, but be content to enjoy the Sweet in every present Circumstance and Event, without Regard to their future Tendency. The same Dis-temper prevailing, we shall be apt to think every Thing healthful that is pleasant, and easily admit those Principles most true, which are most grateful to our Appetites. It is not therefore to be wondered at, if the same Humour which makes us greedy of embracing, makes us obstinate in defending pleasing Errors. For the same Fondness and Partiality renders us incapable of Instruction, and impatient of Advice, though designed by the most faithful Affection, and managed with the most prudent Tenderness.

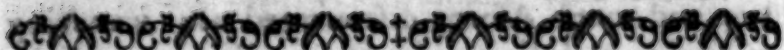
It is easy now to judge what must be the State of that Man, who is insincere and false to himself in his Deliberations, and obstinate in the Defence of his Errors; who is partial in all his own Reflections, and impatient of the faithful Reflections of
M 3 others;

others: How is it probable that *that* Man should attain to any rational Happiness, who is incapable of using his own Reason aright, or enjoying the Benefit of other's?

BUT it is not the only Mischief we suffer by these Diseases of the Mind, that they render us incapable of discovering true Happiness; they also disable us to pursue it when discovered with that Earnestness and Vigour which the Importance of the Thing requires; for they must needs beget in us a slothful Remissness in our Endeavours, and an unhappy Levity and Inconstancy in all our Purposes. It is very improbable that we should be steady and immoveable in those Purposes which are not founded upon clear and solid Reason, or zealous in such as are encountered with violent Opposition from ourselves: Hence it is that the Scenes of Man's Life are so various, so frequently changed; that every Man does so often shift his Person, and appear a very different Actor on the Stage. Nor is it any Man's Wit or Sagacity that turns him into all these different Shapes, but his Vice and Folly; for being ignorant of the true Good, the true Happiness of Man, he catches at fleeting Shadows, and courts thin airy Dreams, and uncertain Apparitions; and therefore daily sets up new Projects, and those too, repugnant to the old: And thus, Man wearieth out himself by vain and unsuccessful, because inconstant vanishing Attempts. This were tolerable, did it befall us only in temporal Things, whose Emptiness makes our Success itself Disappointment; but alas, we suffer the same Thing in the weighty Concerns of Virtue and Happiness. Our religious Purposes generally die strangled in the Birth, and all our glorious Designs dash themselves to Pieces against the next Difficulty or Temptation; and yet relapsed

relapsed into a State of Folly, and Sin, and Danger, we would again return to that narrow Path, whose steep and rough Ascent discouraged us; wandering in Night, and Fog, and Storm, fain would we reach the happy Region, where calm Light and chearful Day does ever dwell: Plainly, when we resolve to be virtuous, we are kept from it by the seeming Ease and Pleasure of Sin, and the Hardships necessary to be undergone in the Attainments of Virtue; and yet the Remorse, and Danger, and Dissatisfaction which always accompany a negligent and sinful Life, make us wish for the Peace and Comfort, the Security and Rewards of Virtue. But O! how seldom do we proceed further than Wishes, or some Attempts more lazy and dispirited than our Wishes? The Reason is plain, Virtue is more rational, Vice is more grateful; the Understanding is convinced, but the Will is enslaved: *The Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh.* A Sinner cannot purchase the Pleasures of the Mind, but by some Severities of the Body; nor enjoy the Pleasures of the Body, without the Checks and Reproaches of the Mind: And this makes him unsteady and irresolute in all his Purposes.





C H A P. III.

The Cure of the former Maladies.

FROM this Account of the Rise and Progress of Man's Misery, it is easy to infer what it is wherein the Happiness of this Life consists, or at least what the universal and immediate Cause of it is, namely a Conformity of our Minds and Lives to true Reason; this is a State of Light and Knowledge, of Peace and Security, of lasting and rational Delight. This invests the Understanding in its just Sovereignty, and restores the Will to its true Liberty. This makes our Prospect of the future, taking and inviting, and our Reflection on the Time past, easy and comfortable. This lays a solid Foundation for our Reliance on the Merits and Intercession of our Mediator, and raises our Hope as high as Heaven. This prevents our Misfortunes and Calamities, or, what is more happy, enables us to conquer them. In a Word, this makes us great in Life, but much more great and venerable in Death; Righteousness and Goodness revealing its Beauty and Glory most then, when all Things else shrink and fade.

WE see the Happiness that springs from our Conformity and Subjection to Reason: And it is easy from these two Things wherein, especially, I have declared the Sinners Deviation from Reason to consist, to infer, what we must do, if we will live rationally,

FIRST,

FIRST, *We must propose to ourselves a wise and rational End of Life.*

SECONDLY, *We must pursue this End with Life, and Spirit, and Constancy.*

THESE I lay down as the first and most comprehensive Rules for the Attainment of Happiness: I will therefore say something of each, but briefly, and in general Terms, as the Nature of this Treatise requires.

FIRST, *We must propose to ourselves a wise and rational End of Life*; that is, the true Happiness of a rational Creature. When we have done this, when our Understandings are fully convinced of the Excellence and Necessity of it, and when we have possessed our Minds with a sacred Reverence, a firm and devout Love for it; this, like the Eastern Star, will lead us through all the Windings and Turnings of Life to *Bethlehem* and Happiness; this will soon disengage us from that Labyrinth of contradictory Desires and wild Opinions, in which the Fool and Sinner is endlessly entangled. When we have done this, we shall find every Place a School, every one we converse with a Tutor, and every Passage of our Life, or another's, full of Instruction: Not a Look, whether chearful or melancholy; not a Word, whether wise or foolish; not a Sigh that an oppressed Heart vents, not a Joy that smiles in the Face, but will shew us the Use and Beauty of Divine Truth, and Divine Virtue; for in the Vicious we shall see what false and fading Pleasures, what idle Fears, what vain Sorrows, fill their Minds; in the Good we shall see what true Peace Virtue creates in the Mind, what Constancy and Majesty in the Life, what Courage and Hopes it inspires in Affliction, what Magnanimity and Humility

Humility in Prosperity; and in a Word, what Light, what Serenity it diffuses through the whole Man: We shall see in many Instances every Day, what the Mischiefs of irrational Desires and ungovernable Passions are; and on the contrary, how great the Advantages of Truth and Virtue, of Wisdom, and the due Regulation of all our Passions; nor is the Illumination of our Understanding the only Advantage which we shall reap from the prefixing ourselves a rational End of Life, and the possessing our Souls with the Love of it; for when we have done this, we shall be actually freed from the greater Part of the Troubles of Life; we shall be raised above all senseless, silly Desires, and consequently above all senseless, silly Vexations: For when we have set our Hearts upon true and rational Happiness, how unnecessary, nay, how despicable will most of these Things appear which we now admire and covet? We shall not then think it reasonable to sigh and toil for this House or that Land, for this Preferment or that Trade, this Honour or that Beauty; for these are no essential, no necessary Ingredients of a rational Happiness.

NOR is this all, thy Joys and Pleasure will increase upon thee; for by approaching every Day nearer and nearer to thy great End, thou wilt be wonderfully surprized with fresh Delight, whilst thou dost behold the Fruit of thy Travel, and the daily Increase of thy Wealth: Thou wilt see thyself like a thriving Plant grow up daily more strong and beautiful. The covetous Man grows not richer by heaping up, nor the ambitious Man greater by rising higher, or at least neither grows happier by being either richer or greater; but thou wilt every Day grow wiser by Study, more virtuous by Practice, calmer and happier by both. O! to what a Height

Height will thy Pleasure rise, when thy Store shall grow big enough to entertain not thyself only, but all Men else; when the Thirsty shall come and drink at thy Streams, and the Scorched shall refresh themselves under thy Shade; when thou, led by the same Spirit with our great LORD and Master, shalt open the Eyes of the Blind, and the Ears of the Deaf, shalt cast out Devils, and strengthen the Feet of the Lame; I mean, when thou shalt teach the Foolish Wisdom, when thou shalt persuade and charm the Obstinate, when thou shalt deliver the Unclean and the Passionate from the evil Spirits, the Vices that possessed them, and when thou shalt teach the enslaved and impotent Sinner, how to overcome the World, the Flesh, and the Devil: Thou wilt then indeed, as thou art the Image, so do the Works of GOD; thou wilt be a heavenly and tutelar, tho' mortal Angel amongst Men; and wherever thou dost, there Wisdom, Virtue, and Happiness will dwell too. But to attain to this State, it is not only necessary to prefix ourselves a rational End of Life; but also,

SECONDLY, *We must pursue this End with Life, and Spirit, and Constancy.* It is not a good Fit or a devout Passion that will make us either virtuous or happy: There must go more than this to conquer an ill Habit, or implant a good one. It is not one brisk Sally, or one warm Charge that will subdue the World and Flesh, and put us into Possession of Victory and Security: No, when Warmth and Passion have made a prosperous Impression on the Enemy, a sober Patience must make good the Ground we have gained, a steady and resolved Courage must urge and press the Advantage to an Issue; without Vigour, Patience and Constancy to carry us still forwards, the Warmth with which we begin the Course of Virtue, will stand us in little Stead:

Stead: Ah! How many have marched out of *Ægypt*, and perished in the Wilderness? How many have wrecked within Sight of Shore? How many have lost their Reward of Repentance by their Relapse? How many have fallen by Negligence, Security, and Sloth into that wretched State, out of which they had once delivered themselves by Courage, Resolution, and Self-denial? Nor is the *Necessity* of Vigour, Patience, and Constancy, in our Pursuit of Happiness, the only Motive to it; the Certainty of Success, and the Greatness of the Advantages, which attended it, are sufficient to animate any Man that seriously considers it: The Labour and Hope of the Husbandman is lost, unless the fruitful Earth and fruitful Seed be blest with fruitful Seasons too: The Trade of the Merchant is properly but Adventuring, and his Increase depends as much on Winds and Waves, as on his own Skill and Diligence; but it fares not thus with Man in his Pursuit of Happiness: The Traffick of the Philosopher depends not upon Winds nor Tide; the Seeds of Virtue, if the Ground be well cultivated, will thrive in any Weather, and sometimes better in Storms than Sunshine. Finally, the Success of our Conflicts against Sin and Misery depends not on Fortune, but Courage and Industry.

How unspeakable a Pleasure is it now to think, that we cannot be disappointed of our Travels, nor defeated of our Hopes, while we labour for Virtue and Happiness? If our Endeavours be sincere and persevering, our Success is certain and unquestionable: But what an Accession doth this Pleasure receive, when we consider, what will be the glorious Fruit of this Success? Tranquility, Chearfulness, Enlargement of Soul, Pleasure, Life, Immortality; in one Word, Happiness. O glorious Reward of our Conflict, and our Victories! What
neither

neither Wealth, nor Greatness, nor Honour, nor Crowns; what neither Blood, nor Toil, nor Cunning, nor Fortune, can give! That, rational and sincere Endeavours after Wisdom and Virtue will give the meanest Man upon Earth, that is, *Happiness*! O blessed Issue of Philosophical, that is, truly Christian Travel! The Rich, the Great, the Honourable, the Mighty, may complain even of their Success, and repent them of the Purchase they have made at too dear a Rate; but the Christian can never repent of the Success of his Study, his Self-denial, his Patience, his Prayers: For how is it possible to complain of being happy, or repent of being wise and virtuous? There is nothing empty, nothing evil, nothing mean, nothing uncertain in true Wisdom, in rational Happiness.

THIS brief and general Account of Happiness, and of the Way to it, does naturally instruct us how we are to treat the Body, and what it is that a rational Education and wise Conversation, ought to aim at: If our Conformity to Reason be either the Happiness of this present Life, or the immediate Causes of it, (for I will not trouble myself with nice and subtle Distinctions) then it is plain, that we are obliged to such a Kind of Discipline and Government of ourselves, as may render the Body most obsequious to the Mind, and may exalt and establish the Power and Dominion of Reason: For whatever tends to obscure our Understanding, to enfeeble the Will, to cherish our sensual Inclinations, and augment their Force, doth so far necessarily tend to deprave the Nature of Man, and to subvert and overthrow his Happiness: And from hence it appears, that the Excellence of Education consists in possessing the Minds of Youth with true Notions of Good and Evil, and informing and moulding their Minds into an Esteem and Veneration for Wisdom

and Virtue. The first Virtue I conceive a Child capable of, is Obedience; and this is indeed the Foundation of all Virtue: To this, let him be inured and trained up betimes: He that finds it easy to obey another's Reason, will not find it difficult to obey his own; for when the Judgment comes to be formed and ripened, when it comes to exercise its Authority, it will find a Body not used to give, but receive Commands. From this Virtue of Obedience he is to be led gently on to a rational and voluntary Choice of what is Good; he must be taught gradually, not only his plain Duty, but the Motives to it; for it is as necessary to his Happiness that he should love, as that he should know his Duty. But this we strive in vain to instill by Art and Instruction, if we do not instill it by the Influence of wise Examples too.

As to Conversation, it is plain, that it ought to be the Practice of those Virtues which a pious Education instill'd; and that we ought to have no less Reverence for our Reason when we are under our own Government, than we had for the Authority of our Parents when we were under theirs: What ought to be the Tie of Friendship, what the Rules of Conversation, and what the great Ends of Society, is abundantly manifest from the Nature of that Happiness which it behoves us to propose as the great End of Life: What is the great End of Man, ought to be the Design of Society; and therefore it is plain that Wisdom and Virtue ought to be the Foundation and Bond of those Friendships which we enter into, and that Conversation should be so regulated, that we may grow by it more wise and virtuous.

I HAVE now finished this Discourse, which I designed only as an Introduction to those which are
to

to follow. I do not think that it is now necessary for me, in a pathetick Conclusion, to persuade Men to endeavour to be *happy*. The Desires of Happiness are inseparable from all Beings; at least it is impossible to be rational, and not desire to be happy. If I have therefore sufficiently proved that it is possible to be happy; and if I have shew'd that a diligent Enquiry, a vigorous and persevering Industry is necessary to the Attainment of it; if I have pointed out the general Causes of human Misery, and together with them their general Cure and Remedy, I have done enough to enkindle those Desires, and beget those Resolutions in my Reader, which if they do not make him actually happy, will at least prepare him for a further Enjoyment of Happiness. I have therefore nothing more to put him in Mind of now but this, That as I all along suppose the Grace of GOD necessary to second and enforce our Reason, so I would ever be understood to urge the Necessity of our Prayers, as much as that of our Endeavours, the Fervency of the one, as much as the Sincerity of the other.

The End of the First Part.



6 JY 64

AN
ENQUIRY
AFTER
HAPPINESS.

BY
RICHARD LUCAS, D.D.

PART II.



6 JY 64

AN
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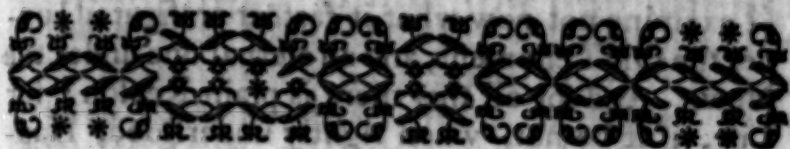
BY
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PART II.



THE
INTRODUCTION.

HAVING removed whatever might discourage or frustrate our Endeavours after Happiness, I am now to proceed to a more particular Examination of the Nature of it, and the Ways and Methods that lead to it. In which I am obliged, according to my general Design, to treat of Life, Perfection, Indolence, and Fruition; accordingly I here begin with Life; and dividing this Book into three Sections, I will, in the First, Discourse of the true Notion of human Life. In the Second, Of the right Conduct or Regulation of it. In the Third, Of the right Husbanding human Life, by prolonging and improving it.



A N

Enquiry after Happiness.

S E C T. I.

Of the true Notion of Life.

C H A P. I.

Life a great Blessing in itself. Proves a great Evil to some. And why? Happiness perfect only in Heaven.

THOUGH Life renders us capable of Pain as well as Pleasure, yet has it ever been valued as the richest Blessing; the Love of it is the earliest and the strongest Principle in us. Nor does this Passion want the Suffrage of the wisest and the greatest Men, or the Approbation of GOD; for one chief Design of Society and Government, is the Protection of Life; and GOD who best understood the

the Bent of human Nature, has proposed, as the powerfullest Motive to Obedience, a long Life [I examine not now what it farther prefigured] under the Old Testament, and an eternal one under the New. And for all this there is plain Reason; for Life, if it be not, when rightly understood, Happiness itself, yet is it surely the Foundation of it; and the Foundation in a Building, if it be not as beautiful as the upper Stories, yet is as necessary.

BUT it is with Life as with all other Blessings, the right Use of it is our Happiness; the Abuse of it our Misery. There is nothing in the Nature of the Thing that implies Evil or Trouble; nor has it any necessary and inevitable Tendency to it. We must not therefore estimate a Blessing by the Mischief it occasions to such as pervert and abuse it. It is true, when all is said, Heaven is the proper Region of Happiness, there it dwells in its Glory and Majesty; but what then? Because Perfection does properly belong to Heaven, is there no Virtue upon Earth? Because all Things are in their Maturity there, shall we deny that there is any Sweetness or Beauty here? Just so must we think of the Happiness of this, in Comparison of that of another World; it is here in its Infancy. We slumber, and are scarce ever fully awake; we see little, comprehend less; and we move very feebly and unsteadily; but all this while we grow up to Strength, we advance towards Perfection, our Joints grow firmer, our Stature increases, our Understanding dawns towards Day, and our Affections are gradually animated with a more generous and lasting Heat; so that all this while this infant State of Happiness is pleasant and promising, and every Step in the whole Progress towards Perfection, presents us with fresh Beauties and Delights. I will not therefore spend any more Time
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in endeavouring to prove Life a valuable Blessing, but rather proceed to shew how every Man may make it such to himself; which I think I cannot more compendiously do, than by stating the true Notion of human Life; for as our Misery flows from the Abuse, and our Happiness from the right Use of Life, so does the Abuse from false, and the right Use from true Notions of it.

CHAP. II.

Life, what in a Natural Sense, what in a Moral. Life, Perfection, and Enjoyment, inseparably united. More particularly, Life consists not in Sloth, Sensuality, Worldliness, Devilishness; but in the Regulation of all our Actions according to right Reason.

LIFE may be considered either in a Natural or Moral Sense; in the former, what it is, is an Enquiry very abstruse and intricate; like the *Egyptian Nile*, though it Streams be visible to every Eye, its Source or Fountain is concealed; or like Grace, though we feel its Energy, and taste its Fruits, yet we cannot discover and define its Essence; but to carry our Discovery thus far, is Accuracy enough in moral Discourses, whose End is not Speculation, but Happiness.

LIFE then, whatever it be in the Fountain, as we can discern it, is nothing else but that Force and Vigour which moves and acts the Man; and to live, speaking in a natural Sense, is to exert the

the Powers and Faculties of Nature ; according to which Account of Life, it is capable of as many Notions as are the different Offices it performs ; it is Knowledge in the Understanding ; and Love and Hate, with all their Train of Passions, in the Heart or Soul.

Now because all Morality consists in the right Use of those Blessings which our great and bountiful Author confers upon us, therefore, in a moral Sense, the true Life of Man, is nothing else but a right Use of our whole Nature ; an active employing it in its due Offices, a vigorous Exercise of all our Powers and Faculties, in a Manner suitable to the Dignity and Design, to the Frame and Constitution of our Beings. To live then, in a moral Sense, is to know and contemplate, to love and pursue that which is the true Good of Man ; this is the Life of the Understanding, Will, Affections, and of the whole Man ; and whatever Acts of ours are not some Way or other conversant about Truth and Goodness, are not properly Acts of human Life, but Deviations from it.

AND here I cannot but pause a little, to admire the infinite Wisdom and Goodness of the Almighty Architect, who has contrived an inseparable Connection and necessary Dependence between Life, Perfection, and Fruition ; every rational Act, every right Use of our natural Powers and Faculties, as it is of the Essence of the moral Life, so does it contribute to the Improvement and Perfection of our Beings, and to the Felicity of our State ; for Perfection is the Result of such repeated Acts, and Pleasure of our entertaining ourselves with proper and agreeable Objects. Happy Man ! to whom, to live, improve, and enjoy, is the same Thing ; who cannot defeat God's Goodness
and

and his own Happiness, but by perverting his Nature, and depraving his Faculties; but by making an ill Use, or none at all, of the Favours and Bounties of God.

If we examine this Notion of Life more closely, and distinctly, and resolve this general Account of it, into several Particulars, we shall easily arrive at a fuller and clearer Comprehension of it.

First, IT is evident from this Account of Life, that it does not consist in *Sloth*, in the Cohabitation of Soul and Body; in meer Continuance in this World. *Solomon* indeed tells us, *Truly Light is sweet, and a pleasant Thing it is to behold the Sun*, Eccles. xi. 7. But if we must call it Pleasure, it is but a faint and low one, such as irrational Creatures are capable of; it can never deserve the Name of Life: He that possesses vital Powers and Faculties, is in a Capacity of Life, but he only that exerts them, lives. To live, is not to spend or waste our Time, but to employ it: It is a lamentable History of Life, when it can all be summed up in the few Syllables of a Funeral Ring; he lived to, or rather, as it is wont to be expressed, he died such a Day of the Month, such a Year of his Age; for indeed he lived not at all; Life is a mere Dream, not only on the Account of its Shortness, but also of its Night and Lethargy, when stupid Ignorance confines and dims the Prospect, and Sluggishness enfeebles all the Powers of the Mind: Vigour and Activity, Fruition and Enjoyment make up Life; without these, Life is but an imperfect Embryo, a mingled Twilight that never will be Day; the Images which the Slothful form of Things are faint and obscure, like Pictures drawn in watery Colours, and vanish as easy as those half Sounds and imperfect Forms which

which we take in between Sleep and Waking; all their Passions move drowsily and heavily, and all their Entertainments have no more Relish than abortive Fruit, which can never be ripened into Sweetness or Beauty. When I have observed any one thus wasting a whole Life, without ever being once well awake in it, passing through the World like a heedless Traveller, without making any Reflections or Observations, without any Design or Purpose befitting a Man: Ah! thought I, is this that Creature for which this great Theatre the World was made; for which it was so adorned and enriched? Is this the Creature that is the Epitome of the World, the Top and Glory of the visible Creation, a little inferior to Angels, and allied to God? Is this Machine acted by a wise and immortal Spirit? Ah! how much is this poor useless stupid Thing sunk beneath the Dignity and Design of its Nature! How far short is it fallen of the Glory to which God had destined it! Shall this contemptible Thing ever be admitted to eternal Life, who has so wretchedly fooled away his temporal one? No surely, I could upon the first Thought imagine his sluggish Soul would vanish like those of the Brutes; I could easily imagine that it could sleep, not as some fancy all Souls do, to the Resurrection, but to all Eternity. But upon better Consideration, I find this ignorant Life, is not so innocent as to deserve no worse a Fate: For is it a small Crime to live barren and unfruitful, endowed with so many Talents? To frustrate the Design of our Creation? To stifle all the Seed of Divine Life and Perfection? To quench the Grace and Spirit of God? In a Word, is it a small Crime to be false and perfidious to God, unjust and injurious to Man? No, it cannot be; and therefore the slothful and wicked Servant signify one and the same Thing, and must undergo one and the same Sentence.

Secondly,

Secondly, LIFE cannot consist in Sensuality, that is, in the mere Gratification of our carnal Appetites. The Reasons of this Assertion are evident from the general Notion of Life. For,

FIRST, This is not the Exercise of the whole Nature, but a Part of it, and that the inferior and ignobler too.

SECONDLY, It is not an Employment suitable to the Dignity of our Nature.

FIRST, Sensuality employs only the meaner Part of us. The Sensualist, though he seem fond of Life, does foolishly condemn the better Half of it; and as much a Slave to Pleasure as he is, he chuses to drink only the Dregs, and lets the pure Streams of sprightly and delicious Life pass by untasted; for if there be a sensitive and rational Soul, there must be a sensitive and rational Life too, and one as much elevated above the other, as the Principles they flow from. But whether this be so or no, does not import much; for it is plain, that Life, whatever it be, is like Seed, which, according to the different Soil it is sown in, produces Fruit more or less luscious and beautiful; here it sprouts forth like the seven poor lean, there like the seven plump and rich Ears of Corn in *Pharaoh's* Dream; and should it by Way of Fiction be supposed, that one and the same Soul did communicate Life to Men, Beasts, and Vegetables; however, Life in each would be equal in the Dignity of its Original, it would vastly differ in its Effects and Operations; so whether Life in Man flow from one or two distinct Principles, it is evident that its Price and Dignity varies according to the different Powers and Faculties which it moves and animates: And by Consequence that Life which displays itself in the Acts of our rational

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tional Part, will be as different from that which consists in Sensation, and the Motions of bodily Appetites, as is the Light that glitters in a Diamond, from that which faintly imitates it in a Pebble; the more numerous and the more exquisite our Faculties, the vaster is the Empire of Life, and the more delicate and charming all its Functions and Operations: How evident is this in all the Organs and Senses of the Body? Let Darkness invade the Eye, and Deafness the Ear, and then within what narrow Bounds is the bodily Life reduced? How few and ignoble are the vital Acts and Operations of the Body? How vile and contemptible are all the Fruits or Instances of a sensitive Life? If then there be no Sense or Organ of the Body superfluous, can we think the rational Soul itself can be so? If there be no Power, no Capacity of a sensitive Soul, by which Life is not enlarged or enriched, must we not needs conclude, That to extinguish the immortal Spirit within us, and as it were, to discard all its Powers and Faculties, must needs be to impoverish, mutilate, and stifle it? Since I have a Soul as well as a Body, since the one is as capable of conversing with God and Heaven, with Truth, and Goodness, and Perfection, as the other is of conversing with this World of visible Objects, I cannot but conclude, That to be destitute of Knowledge and Faith, of Hope and Love, is more injurious to the true Life of Man, than to be deaf or blind; that Stupidity or Lethargy in the Soul, such as renders it incapable of rational Pleasure, is as inconsistent with the true Life of Man, as Lethargy or a dead Palsy in the Body can be; and to be excluded from Commerce with the invisible World, is as fatal to it, as to be debarred the visible one.

FROM all this it is evident, that whether we consider Life with Respect to its Excellence and Dignity,

Dignity, or to its Enlargement and Extension, Sensuality is extremely injurious to it in both Respects; so far doth it debase and contract it, that I may boldly conclude, to place Life in Sensuality, is to renounce the much more valuable and delightful Part of it, to banish ourselves the much better World, and to rob ourselves of a thousand Joys and Pleasures which we might reap from the rational Powers and Faculties, that is, the noblest Capacities and Endowments of our Nature. Though this be abundantly enough to evince, that Life consists not in Sensuality; yet this being of the highest Importance to Happiness, I will proceed to the second Argument against it; that is,

SECONDLY, *It is not consonant to the Dignity of human Nature*; or, which is all one, to the Design of our Beings, conspicuous in our Frame and Constitution. Who, that ever considered what Sensuality was, how narrow the Extent of Sense, how mean and brutish the Pleasure that terminates in it, what a Corruption and Degeneracy it ends in, who, I say, that he has ever considered these, and a thousand Things more, can believe that Sensuality is an Employment worthy of a Man? Is this the Business of a vast and comprehensive Mind? Is this consistent with Desires of Immortality, with unquenchable Thirst of Truth, with a Capacity of discovering spiritual Excellencies, and moral Beauties, and Perfections? Was it for this we were endowed with Propensions to adore a Deity? What can be as much as fancied, the Use of Wisdom, Magnanimity, Conscience, Sagacity, Foresight, and Enquiries into future Things and Times, if Sensuality had been the only Employment designed Man? How much more fit had we been form'd for this End, if there had been in us no Reason to check and controul us; no Conscience that could fill us

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with

with Regret for the past, or Fear for the future; no Wisdom that could teach us, that there were any Thing above us; nor Greatness of Mind, that could reproach us for stooping to any Thing below us?

It is almost superfluous to add, That Life consists not in Worldliness or Devilishness; as to the former of these, by which I mean the Cares and Pursuits of the World, it is plain, that to employ our Time and Faculties in this alone, is not to live, but at best to provide for Life. Necessity may sometimes subject us to the Drudgery of the World, but a voluntary Choice never should. I know no other Difference between a mean Fortune and a great one, than this, that the great one sets a Man above those Cares, which the mean one forces him to submit to; that the one puts us into the immediate Possession of all the Means and Instruments of Life, Improvement and Fruition, and of Leisure and Opportunity to make Use of them; but the latter obliges us to purchase these Advantages with Toil and Sweat, Sollicitude and Care: It is therefore an unpardonable Wilfulness or Blindness, whenever that Vassallage, which is the Infelicity of the mean Man, is the Choice of the rich one: Nor is it a more pardonable Error in any, who continue the Drudgery and Care when the Necessity is over, and voluntarily suffer all the Disadvantages of a narrow Fortune, even when they have obtained a plentiful one; who never think it Time to begin to live, or to enjoy the Success of their Cares and Diligence: This is an Absurdity as gross as his, who after he has plowed and sowed, should refuse to reap; or his, who having, with much Cost and Labour, furnished out a plentiful Table, should not at length find in his Heart to eat.

LIFE then consists not in the Abundance of the Things which a Man possesses, much less in the Vexation or Toil of acquiring, securing, or increasing them, which is that I intend by Worldliness; but lest of all can Life consist in Devilishness, that is, Wrath, Strife, Revenge, Pride; this cannot be called the Vigour and Activity, but Storm and Agony of our Nature; this is a State wherein the Understanding is covered with the Darkness of Hell, that is, Ignorance of Good and Evil; and the Passions are but Furies unchained, and let loose.

HAVING thus, by resolving concerning Life, that it consists not either in *Sloth* or *Sensuality*, *Worldliness* or *Devilishness*, pointed out those fatal Errors which mislead Men from the Paths of Peace and Happiness; it is now Time to shew in the last Place, what it is wherein Life does more immediately and particularly consist; that is, *in a vigorous and active Employment of the whole Man, according to the Rules and Dictates of right Reason.*

WHEN I make Reason the Director and Guide of human Life, I no more mean to exclude the Aid of Revelation, and the Spirit of God, than when I affirm the Eye to be the Guide of the Body, I intend to deny the Necessity of Light to good Eyes, or of Spectacles to dim ones. The Proposition thus guarded, will appear indisputable to any who shall consider the Frame of Man. That we are rational Creatures, is a Truth never hitherto controverted; and that Reason is the sovereign Faculty in us, appears from the universal Appeal of all Sides to its Tribunal. Not the Virtuous and Wise only, but the Loose and the Vicious plead the Authority of Reason in Defence of their Actions: As therefore it is plain, that Life consists not in vital Powers

and Faculties, but in the Exercise and Employment of them; so it is as plain, that in this we are not to follow the Conduct of Fancy or Passion, but of Reason. This is the right Use of our natural Gifts, which distinguishes Man from Beasts, and Men from one another; the Philosopher from the Fool, and the Saint from the Sinner: In this consists the Order and Dignity of human Nature, in this the Beauty and Tranquility of human Life, and in this the inward Joy and Peace of the Mind.

THIS will be yet more manifest to whosoever will take the Pains to enquire what the Office of Reason is: It is this which teaches us what Rank we hold among the Creatures of God, what Station we fill in the World, what our Relations and Dependencies are, what the Duty and what the Hopes, what the Benefit and what the Pleasure that result from each: It is this which prescribes all our Powers and Passions, their Order, Place, and Work: It is this which distinguishes Truth and Falshood, Good and Evil: It is this which fills us with the Knowledge, and enflames us with the Love of our sovereign Happiness, and judges of the Ways that lead to it: And finally, it is this which teaches us to set a true Value upon all inferior Things, in Proportion to their Tendency, either to promote or obstruct our sovereign Good. Happy therefore is that Life, where Reason is the sovereign Arbitrator of all our Actions, and where all the Powers of the Soul are Servants and Instruments of Reason: Happy this Life, for it can neither want Pleasure to entertain it, nor Business to employ it: Happy the Soul which thus lives, for it shall never want Comfort to support it, Hopes to encourage it, nor Crowns to reward it; for as it grows in Wisdom and Goodness, so must it in Favour with God
and

and Man; and its Peace and Tranquility, its Joys and Expectations must receive a proportionable Increase.



C H A P. III.

INFERENCES *drawn from the former Chapter.*

First, *To cultivate our Reason.* Secondly, *To renounce every Thing that opposes it, as Fancy, Passion, Example, Custom.* Thirdly, *That it is possible to be happy in every State.* Fourthly, *That a long Life is a great Blessing.*

FROM the Notion of Life thus stated, it is evident, *First*, That our Business is to cultivate and improve Reason; for this, as you have seen, is to be the Guide and Superintendant of all our Powers and Faculties, and the Arbiter and Judge of all our Actions: *If the Light that is in you, be Darkness, how great is that Darkness?* Matt. vi. 23. Vigour and Action, if Reason do not steer them, will but prove mischievous and fatal to us; Diligence and Industry themselves will only serve to corrupt our Nature, and embroil our Life; every Deviation from Reason, is a Deviation from our true Perfection and Happiness: The Fool and the Sinner do, in the Language of the Scripture, signify the same Thing. This is the true Original of all those Mischiefs which infest the World, the Neglect or Contempt of right Reason; it is this which makes our Complaints so numerous, and so bitter;

bitter; it is this that makes us so weak and soft in Adversity, so restless in Prosperity itself; it is this creates all those Disasters and Disappointments which make us often quarrel at Providence: *The Folly of Man perverteth his Way, and his Heart fretteth against God, Prov. xix. 3.* Well therefore did the Wiseman advise, *Prov. iv. 7. Wisdom is the principal Thing, therefore get Wisdom; and with all thy Getting, get Understanding.*

THE Necessity of this does easily appear from the slightest Reflection upon the Work or Office of Reason, of which I have given a general Account before, much more from the Use of it, in three great Points; the employing our Faculties, the Enjoyment of Good, and the bearing Evil.

First, THE employing our Faculties. The Soul of Man, like a fertile Field, may produce either Herbs or Weeds; the Faculties of it are capable of being the Instruments of the greatest Evil or the greatest Good; the greatest Good, if regulated and conducted by Reason; the greatest Evil, if led by any other Principle. What is the Imagination of a Fool, but a Shop of Toys and Trinkets, where a thousand empty Ideas flutter confusedly up and down? What his Memory, but a Sink of Sins and Follies, of mean and shameful Things and Actions, not a Treasury of excellent Truths, laid up like Provision for Time both of Peace and War? What his Heart, but the Rendezvous of a thousand mutinous, violent, and dishonourable Lusts, which rend and tear him, worse than the Devil in the Gospel the Man possessed? Nay, what is Fancy and Wit itself, if destitute of sound Judgment and true Reason, but I know not what Sort of Flashes, which dazzle, but do not guide; serve for Amusement, rather than Nourishment or Delight? And therefore the

the Author is very well paid, if he be praised and starved, which is generally his Fate. In a Word, neither Business nor Diversion can have in them any Thing truly useful or truly pleasing, if they be not conducted by right Reason; and all the Dispositions and Faculties of our Nature will be but either lost upon Fooleries, or abused to our Ruin.

Secondly, THE Use of Reason is conspicuous in the Fruition of Good. Knowledge is like Light shed upon the Face of the World, which discovers all its various Beauties and wondrous Wealth; which while Darknes covered them, were as though they had not been. Without Reason we shall not be able to discern or value our own Happiness, nor be sensible of our Blessings, even though they croud upon us; without this, our very Enjoyments will prove fatal to our Repose, and we shall meet Gall and Wormwood in the Bottom of our Draughts of Pleasure: *For the turning away of the Simple shall slay them, and the Prosperity of Fools shall destroy them, Prov. i. 32.*

IT requires no small Philosophy, either to render Business pleasant, or Pleasure innocent; either to discharge those Duties which a great Birth or eminent Station call Men to, or to employ that Time which an ample Fortune makes them entirely Masters of; and to husband a Life of Ease and Enjoyment to the best. Ah! how often have I seen the Vigour of Nature dissolved by Pleasure, the Edge and Fineness of its Parts blunted by Sloth and Softness? How often have I seen Men rendered mean and contemptible by Prosperity, for which they were not big enough? Whereas had the Mind been enriched with true Wisdom, Pleasure had refined and recruited Nature, and Power, Honour, and Plenty, had only placed Worth and Greatness in
a better

a better Light. This is true in its Proportion from the lowest to the highest Station; it requires Reason to govern and enjoy Prosperity; an obscure and narrow Fortune is most convenient both to conceal and preserve a Fool; for Plenty and Power, Dignity and Preferment, do but expose him to Scorn and Danger, and it were well if the poor Creature could perish or suffer alone; but the Mischief is, like a false and sandy Foundation, he overthrows the Designs and Interests that are built upon him, and miserably betrays the Confidence reposed in him: But how great soever the Use of Reason be, as to the Goods, it is no less as to the Evils of this World: For,

Thirdly, REASON is the Pilot of human Life, and steers it steadily through wild and tempestuous Seas, amidst the Rocks and Shelves of Lust and Fancy, Fortune and Folly, Ignorance, Error, and a thousand Cheats and Impostures: It is this alone that enables Man to despise imaginary Evils, and vanquish real ones; it arms the Mind with true and lasting Magnanimity, furnishes it with solid Comforts, and teaches it to extract Life and Health, Virtue and Wisdom, out of the Madness and Mutability of Men and Fortune, like Antidotes and Cordials out of Things poisonous and baneful in themselves.

It is not now to be wondered at, after this Account of the Use of Reason, if I have resolved it to be the great Business of Man to improve and cultivate it. Surely all the great Men of the World, and all the inspired ones, have been of my Opinion; for their chief, if not only Design, ever was, either to obtain Wisdom themselves, or to propagate it amongst others; and it is evident, that God Himself has ever carried on this one Design of advancing
Wisdom

Wisdom amongst the Sons of Men. This is the Pre-eminence of his Law above those of Men, that these restrain the Actions, but those enlighten the Mind; these punish Offences, but those by informing the Judgment, and strengthening the Reason, prevent the Commission of them, and direct and instigate him to the Practice of Virtue.

THIS then is the great Work that God and Man invite us to, that we should make daily Progress in Knowledge and Understanding: *That we should incline our Ears to Wisdom, and apply our Hearts to Understanding: That we might seek her as Silver, and search for her as for hid Treasures:* And this is that which our Nature and State invite us to; for our Perfection and our Pleasure, our Repose and Tranquility; in one Word, our Happiness depends upon it.

Secondly, It easily follows from the right Notion of Life, that we are to bid Defiance to all those Things which directly oppose, or secretly undermine the Authority of Reason, or any Way obstruct the free Exercise of its Power; for it is to no Purpose to labour to advance Reason, if afterwards we refuse to be governed by it. Reason, if we do not live by it, will serve only to increase our Shame and Guilt. St. Peter thinks it better not to have known the Way of Righteousness, than after the Knowledge of it, to turn from the holy Commandments delivered unto us, 2 Pet. ii. 21.

To stifle the Sparks of Reason, by Negligence and Sloth, to choke the Seeds of Wisdom by a lazy and vicious Education, is a great Crime; but to desert and betray our Reason, grown up to some Maturity, to hold it in Captivity and Fetters, to defile and prostitute it, by compelling it to serve
abominable

abominable Passions; this sure must be a far greater Degree of Wickedness, and consequently must needs expose the Man to the Scorn or Pity of the wise and rational Part of Mankind, to the Reproaches and Confusion of his own Conscience, and to the Wrath of God: Or if none of these Mischiefs should attend the Contempt of Knowledge, yet there is one more of itself sufficient to make Man miserable; it precipitates him into all the Irregularities and Wildnesses imaginable, nothing being so insolent and ungovernable, so savage and untameable as those Passions which are accustomed to over-power and master Reason.

IT is from all this manifest, That whoever loves Life, and would experience it a real Blessing, must with all his Power set himself to remove and defeat whatever may hinder his ready and entire Submission to the Dictates of Reason. Now the Things which enfeeble the Strength of our Reason, and baffle its Authority, are such as these, *Fancy, Passion, Example, Custom*; these we must ever combat, 'till we have reduced them within their Bounds: Fancy surprizes, Passion over-powers, Custom and Example betray our Reason; we must therefore always oppose the Giddiness of Fancy, and the Violence of Passion, and guard our Minds against the Insinuation of Custom and Example; and to do this well, to do it successfully, is of greater Importance than any Work of our secular Calling, than any Attendance upon Trade, or a temporal Interest. This can only make us great, but that will make us wise; this can make us rich, but that will make us happy; this therefore must be the great Business of Life, to assert the Majesty and Sovereignty of Reason, and never suffer it to be held captive and enthralled by any vicious Principle, or impotent Lust: Happy the Man who succeeds in this!

this! His Conscience shall never reproach him, nor GOD condemn him; and tho' he may not always hit the next Way, he shall never wholly miss of the Way to Happiness: Therefore from this Notion of Life,

Thirdly, WE may infer the Possibility of human Happiness in every State; for since to live, is but to act regularly, to use and employ our Powers and Faculties rationally; and since Life, Perfection, and Fruition, are one and the same Thing, or else inseparably and intimately united, it is evident that no Circumstances can destroy our Happiness, unless they destroy our Reason; no Condition can render us miserable, but that which can render it impossible for us to act rationally; that which obstructs our Attainment of Knowledge, or our Liberty of acting conformable to it. But what Circumstances can these be? What Condition can we fancy, wherein it shall be impossible for a Christian to know his sovereign Good, and pursue it, to learn his Duty, and to practise it; wherein it shall be impossible for him to search and contemplate Truth, to love and follow after Righteousness and Goodness, and to be meek and humble, modest and magnanimous, just and charitable, pure and devout; wherein, in one Word, it shall be impossible for him to live by Faith, or, which is the same Thing in my Sense, by Reason? The Fountains of Truth and Wisdom lie open to all who thirst after them; and GOD no more denies any his Grace than his Revelation. Which being so, it is evident, that as GOD has put it into the Power of every Man to act rationally, so has He put it in every Man's Power to be happy; that human Happiness is not precarious, or dependent on Fortune, but ourselves; for Life consists not in the Abundance of Things which a Man possesses, but in the right Use of them; and *better is a poor and wise*
 VOL. XL. P *Child,*

Child, than an old and foolish King, Eccl. iv. 13. For the good Estate of the Mind consists not in foreign, but domestick Possessions; not in the Riches of Fortune, but of Grace and Virtue; and Fruition cannot subsist, either in the Abuse of temporal Things, or the Depravation of our Nature, but in the true Cultivation and Improvement of the one, and the right Use of the other.

FROM hence, *lastly*, it easily appears on what Account Length of Days is a great Blessing, whether considered in itself, or with Respect to a future Life.

FIRST in itself. If Life did consist in Earthliness, that is, the scraping and raking together Sums of Money, it is plain that Life must ebb and flow with our Fortune; and whenever the Revolutions of Times or Trades should put a Stop to the Career of our Success, and give a Check to our further Hopes and Projects, we should have nothing else to do but to break off the Thread of Life; for what Use could we make of the Remains of our miserable Days! Or if Life did consist in Sensuality, we should have little Reason to desire to survive our Youth and Strength, and Length of Days would be rather a Burden than a Blessing; for we should soon out-live our Pleasures, and shrink and wither into dull, impotent, and contemptible Things. But if my Notion of Life be true, the Pleasures and Joys of it must increase and multiply with our Years, since Reason ought Day by Day to advance to a more perfect Maturity, and more absolute Authority: *With the Ancient is Wisdom, and in Length of Days Understanding, Job xii. 12. And the Paths of the Righteous are like the shining Light, that shineth more and more to the perfect Day.*

A THOROUGH Experience of the Emptiness and Uncertainty of this World, with a longer and more intimate Acquaintance with another, should possess the Soul of this Man with a Magnanimity that nothing could shake, with a Tranquility that nothing could disturb: The Custom of doing Good, together with the Peace and Delight that spring from the Reflections on it, should make the Current of his Actions run smooth and calm; his Observations on the Changes of human Affairs, the Rise and Declension of Parties and Causes, the secret Springs and Wheels of the Passions of the Mind of Man, together with the various Arts of managing them, fill him with a Sort of a Divine Fore-knowledge, and entertain him with a wondrous Prospect: And how happy must this Man be, the absolute Master of this World, and the immediate Heir of another! Which is the second Thing.

THIS is the only Notion of Life which can render it a Blessing in Reference to its Influence upon another; none but rational Pleasures, which are the Antepast of Heaven, can enkindle our Thirst, or qualify us for the Enjoyment of those Above; nothing but the wise and rational Employment of our Faculties can prepare us for Heaven.

NAY further, if Life had not this Influence upon another World, Length of Days would be an Injury, not Advantage to us; it would only keep us from our Heaven, and put off our Happiness: But now, when every Act of Life perfects our Nature, enlarges our Capacity, and increases our Appetite of Glory; when every Day that is added to Life, by the Production of some new Fruit, does add new Stars to our Crowns of Righteousness, and new Treasures to our heavenly Inheritance; it is evident,

that a long Life is a great Blessing, not only on its own Account, but also of that Life which we expect hereafter. Blessed God, how conspicuous is thy Goodness in this whole Contrivance! How closely hast thou united Virtue and Happiness! And how natural is the Ascent from a rational Life here, to a glorious Life hereafter!





S E C T. II.

Of the different Kinds of Life.

TH O' I will follow the received Division of Life into Active and Contemplative, yet I do not use the Words *Active* and *Contemplative* strictly; but by the first I understand any Sort of publick Life, and any Sort of private one by the last; nor do I much concern myself, whether the Life of a Trader or Artisan be reducible under the one or the other; but accommodating myself to the Nature of Things, I will discourse, *First*, Of a Civil, *Secondly*, Of a Trading, and *Thirdly*, Of a Private Life.

C H A P. I.

Of the Civil Life, or the Active Life of a Gentleman.

BEFORE I go about to set down those Rules which may render Men of Rank and Fortune beloved, eminent, and happy in their Station, I think it necessary to convince such of the Obligations they lie under to be some Way or other service-

able to the World; for it is in vain to talk of the Knowledge and Virtue necessary to adorn a Civil Life, to such as persuade themselves that they are born only to follow their own Humour; and that it is the Perogative of their Birth and Fortune to be idle, ignorant, and loose.

SECT. I. THIS then is the first Thing I would fain make Gentlemen sensible of, that they cannot, without impardonable Guilt, fool away their Life and Fortune; and I think this would not be very hard to effect, if they would please to make but a slight Reflection upon the Arguments I here address to them. You owe more to GOD, and to your Country, not to add to yourselves, tho' that be true too in a proper Sense, than any others do. **TO GOD**—to his Providence you owe it, that you were born to those Fortunes which others toil for; that you are the Masters of that Time, which others are forced to devote to their Wants and Necessities, and that you are placed at first in those advantageous Heights which others climb to by slow and tedious Steps; your Guilt therefore is greater than the mean Man is capable of, while you invade the Honour of that GOD, from whom alone you derive yours; while you dethrone Him who has raised you, and employ all your Power and Treasure against that being from whom you received them; no Ingratitude, no Treachery or Baseness like that of a Favourite and Confident. And as you owe to GOD, so do you to your Country, more than other Men; you are they who should be the Support and Ornament of it; you are placed in higher Orbs, not that like Meteors, your ominous Blaze should be the Gaze and Terror of the Multitude, but that like Stars you might lighten and beautify, animate and impregnate the inferior World; for you, like them, should have an enlarged

larged Prospect, a swift and constant Motion, a bountiful and benign Influence: If your Virtues do not more distinguish you from the Crowd than your Fortunes, you are exposed, not honoured, by the Eminence of your Station, and you debauch and betray your poor Country by your Sin and Folly, which your Example, your Wisdom, your Courage, and your Bounty, with all those other Virtues which Persons of your Rank should shine with, should protect and enrich, and raise to the highest Reputation of Virtue and Power. Miserable must that Kingdom be, whose rich and great Ones, are as much more impudently wicked, as they are more fortunate than other Men; when they, whose Example should awe the vicious, contribute not a little to corrupt the virtuous Part of it, and to debauch the very Genius and Spirit of the Nation. When they, who should be the Patriots of their Country, instead of being Men of Travel and Reading, of Abilities and Experience, of Honour and Activity, are versed only in Essence and Purukes, Game-houses and Stews, and have so far lost the Qualities of a Gentleman, that they are meaner, falser, and cowardlier than the lowest of the People; those must indeed be strange Courts, Counsels, Parliaments, Armies, which are filled and influenced by such as these; that must be a wretched State where Men know no other Politicks, than what an inveterate Aversion to Religion and Virtue suggest.

BUT if your Country move you not, consider yet what you owe yourselves: Idleness is both a Reproach and a Burden; for what can be more dishonourable, than to be good for nothing; or more irksome to an active Nature, such as Man's is, than to have nothing to employ it? What can be more shameful, than for a wealthy, or well-born Man, to be the Pity or Sport of his Country, the
inward.

inward Scorn even of his Domesticks and Neighbours? And what can be a greater Plague, than for one who is Master of his whole Time, and of an ample Fortune, not to know how to employ the one or the other, but in such Courses as tend to the Disgrace of his Family, the Ruin of his Country, and the Damnation of his Soul? You ought too, to remember that great Fortunes generally mark Men out for great Troubles, as well as great Enjoyments; and were there no other Motive to a vigorous and active Life, but this one, that it fortifies the Courage, and hardens the Temper, this should be sufficient to any Man, who will but consider to how many Changes and Revolutions, a great Fortune renders Men obnoxious; so that when Men had not yet entertained the Opinion of the unlawfulness of Self-murder, Poison, as appears from *Livy's* Reflection on *Masanissa's* Present to his Mistress, was a Part of the Domestick Provision of the Families of the Great.

THE Sum of all is, Gifts of Fortune, like those of Grace or Nature, as they capacitate and qualify, so do they oblige Men to suitable Duties; and Christianity expects Increase proportionable to Mens Talents. Not Idleness and Luxury, not Ignorance and Debauchery, but Knowledge and Virtue, and a more eminent Degree of Service to God and Man, ought to be the distinctive Character of the Rich and Great, these are the Abilities that constitute Gentlemen truly great, that make them the Props of a sinking State, or the Glories of a flourishing one; this is that which the Safety and Glory of your Country, and your own Happiness and Posterity demand at your Hands; and happy were it, if the Laws and Customs of our Country, as once of the best constituted Kingdoms and Commonwealths, did exact Virtue and Industry

Industry with the greatest Rigour, and punished Idleness and Riot with Infamy, Banishment, and Death.

NOR has any one Reason to complain, that to oblige the Gentleman to an active and industrious Life, is to debase his Quality, or to invade his Liberty, much less to rob him of all the Pleasures and Advantages he is born to; on the contrary, an active Virtue is the Honour of a Gentleman; this is the only solid Foundation the Love and Esteem of his Country can be built on; all other Advantages of Fortune do but adorn him as a Pageant, to be the Sport and Gaze of the Crowd, and all that have Sense enough to distinguish between Merit and Fortune, will inwardly despise the Fool and Sluggard, whatever Courtship and Compliment they may make to the Esquire and Landlord. And as Business can be no Diminution of his Honour, so neither can it be of his Liberty; for not to insist upon that great Truth, that the Service of Virtue is the only Freedom or Liberty of Man; not to mind you, that the Business of Men of Wealth and Birth is always a Matter of Choice, not Necessity, they being ever in a Condition to retire when they shall judge their Privacy and Leisure more valuable than their Employments; this one single Consideration cannot but silence this Suggestion, that no Man is less Master of himself and his Time, than the Man that has an ample Fortune and no Business: For he is always exposed to the Forms and Impertinences, to the Humours and Sottishness of a Number of People as idle and ignorant as himself; and I think there can be no Servitude so wretched, as that to Luxury and Vanity, nor any Confinement or Attendance so tedious, as a Compliance with the Folly, with the Trifling and Looseness of the

the World: But Business is at all Times a comely Excuse, and never fails of putting a Man handsomely in Possession of his Liberty, and the Disposal of his own Time and Actions.

BUT of all the Aspersions with which Addressees of this Kind are wont to be assaulted, there is none more palpably injurious than this, that to condemn a Gentleman to Business, is to rob him of his Pleasure; for the Truth is, it is Business and Employment that gives Gust and Relish to Pleasure; it is this that prevents the Disease of Pleasure, Surfeit and Satiety; and makes Diversion always new, and Nature always vigorous: It is true indeed, a rational and manly Employment so raises and fortifies the Mind, that it is above being a Slave to sensual Pleasure, and so entertains it, that it needs not make vicious Pleasure a Refuge against the Dulness and Nauseousness of Life. But after all, there is one Consideration more important still, which is, that the Business of a Gentleman, if discharged as it ought to be, is always attended with Pleasure, and that a more sensible one than he can find in any Thing else; for whether he protect the Oppressed, or oppose the Violent and Unjust by his Power; whether he steer the Ignorant and the Simple to their Harbour by his Wisdom, or relieve the Necessity of the Poor by his Wealth; whether he support a sinking Friend, or raise a deserving Creature; whether he assert the Authority of Laws, and maintain the Rights of his Country; in a Word, whether he assist the Publick or the Private by his Fortune, his Abilities, or Virtues; all these have something in them so great, so generous, that I cannot but think the Opportunities and Capacities of these the highest Privileges and Prerogatives of a fortunate Birth.

It was the Sabbath, the Rest of God, when He beheld all his Works, that they were exceeding good; nor can I believe God took more Pleasure in the Creation than He does in the Preservation and Government of the World: How pleasing then must be the Reflections of these God-like Works? For tho' this be not to create a new World, it is certainly to embellish, govern, and support the old. There is little Reason to imagine why the Works of Virtue should procure their Authors less Pleasure than those of Fancy, Wit, and Learning do theirs. Why the Poet should feel a bigger Joy arise from a witty Poem, the Painter from a well-finished Piece, the Architect from a well-contrived Building, the Scholar from a just and regular Discourse, than a Gentleman should from the happy and honourable Effects of Wisdom, Courage, Bounty, and Magnanimity. These sure are the greater Excellencies, and as the Original is more noble, so is the Issue too: For certainly to preserve the Lives and Fortunes of Men, is much more than to make them seem to live in Imagery; to raise a Family, is much more than to contrive and build a House; to feed the Hungry, cloath the Naked, and disperse the Clouds and Sorrows of the Afflicted, by a present and vigorous Remedy, is much more than to treat the Fancy of the Soft and Vain: And in a Word, actually to compose the Divisions, allay the Heats, govern the Impetuosities, and restrain the exorbitant Passions of Men by the Force of Laws, by the Influence of Example, and that Authority and Ascendant which the Fortunes and Abilities of the great Ones give them over their Inferiors, is in my Judgment a much more signal Service to God and Man, than it can ever be to debate a Controversy, or write an Exhortation.

HAVING

HAVING thus demonstrated that Persons of Rank and Fortune lie under many and strong Obligations to Activity in their Sphere, and confuted those Objections which are commonly opposed against it, I will proceed to lay before them, with all due Respect, such Rules as may guard them against that Envy and Danger, that Toil and Discontent which usually accompanies the Motion of the Great, as Dirt or Dust that of their Chariots; and which, on the other Side, may render their Activity a great Instrument of their Felicity. For I would not that such as are the common Patrons and Benefactors of Mankind, should meet with no other Recompence but Trouble and Hazard; as if, like Clouds, they could not refresh and impregnate the Earth, unless they were themselves dissolved and wasted into Showers: I would have every worthy Action be an Accession to their Greatness, and every honourable Performance carry with it a Reward, which should not depend upon the Humour of the Prince, or Levity of the People.

SECT. 2. *Rules to be observed by the Gentleman in a publick Station, or in Order to the Happiness of a Civil Life.*

1. HE must be endowed with Knowledge.

2. WITH Virtues proper for his Rank and Station.

3. HE ought to be constant, resolved, and vigorous, throughout the whole Conduct and Course of his Life and Affairs.

4. His

4. His Time ought not to be so wholly taken up in Business, as not to leave Vacancies for *Religion, Meditation and Friendship.* And

First, He must be endowed with Knowledge. There is no Fortune that Knowledge better becomes, or that stands more in Need of it, than a Gentleman's; without it an Estate is rather cumbersome than useful, and the ignorant Owner must be the Tool of another's Ambition or Interest, the Prey of a menial Servant, or the Property of an imperious Wife or wanton Child, or which is worse, of some crafty Retainer, who grows impudent with the Favour, rich with the Spoils, both of the Honour and Fortune of his Master: The best that can befall such a one is, If he have the good Luck to light into good Hands, and join himself with a right Party, he may be the Appendage of some others Fortune, the Shade of another, who intercepts the Smiles and Thanks due to him; he may, in a Word, talk and act by the Sense and Reason of his Party. But this is a poor and contemptible Condition to a Man of Birth and Fortune, to be incapable of employing or improving the Advantages he is born to, and to be only the Prey or Tool of the Cunning, Avarice, Ambition, and impotent Passions of others; or at best, the Instrument of a wiser Man; for the Wise is born to rule the Fool.

NOR is this all; the Gentleman's Ignorance is so much the more worthy of Reproach, because he appears to be born to greater Opportunities of Knowledge, as he that stands upon a more eminent Height naturally enjoys a more free and open Prospect.

BUT what is worse than all this, a Patrician Fortune joined with a Plebian Understanding, renders a Man not more liable to suffer Mischiefs, than apt to commit it; for if the Man have much Passion, and no Understanding, as Wealth is apt to inspire Men with Pride and Wilfulness, tho' it cannot with Wisdom, what can be expected from such a Person, who hath Power enough to execute his Passions, and no Reason to restrain them! Who looks upon it as a Contumely to be opposed, and tho' he hath no Sense himself, is too big to hear from another! What can such a Man be but a Plague to himself and others! And what can his Wealth and Interest be, but restless Instruments of Evil? It is then indispensibly necessary, as well for the avoiding Evil, as doing Good, that the great Man be endowed with a good Understanding.

THE first Thing he ought to be well acquainted with is *Religion*, as the only Source of solid Wisdom; nor indeed can I see how a Man can be considerable without it; for tho' base Ends require base Instruments in all other Cases, I see not how either Prince or People can trust those Men who are false to God and themselves: It is scarce to be expected, that he who sacrifices his Religion and his Reason, that is, himself, to any Lust or Passion, should be nice or scrupulous of giving up a remoter Interest or Obligation to it. But when I say the Gentleman should be acquainted with Religion, I do not mean that he should perplex himself with the Disputes that have debauched, or Subtleties and Niceties which have dispirited or enervated Christianity; I would have him have so much Illumination as to be able to distinguish between Natural Religion and the Politicks, Revealed Religion and the Fancies and Whim.

Whimsies of Man: I would have him thoroughly instructed in the Reasons and Grounds of our common Christianity, and study and ruminate them 'till he feel the Power of them, and find himself formed and impressed by them. He understands Religion well, who learns from it what it is to be just, and derives from it Courage enough to dare to be so. I should think it a necessary Part of this Knowledge, or at least a good Accomplishment in a Gentleman, to be so far acquainted with Ecclesiastical Story, as not to be ignorant what Influence Religion, or the Pretences of it, has upon the World, and what Use cunning Men have ever made of it; by what Degrees or what Arts the Maxims of the World have been incorporated into Religion, and the Church hath wound and insinuated itself into the State. Thus you will discern what the true Measures of Religion are; you will have a just Regard for wise Constitutions without Bigotry; you will free yourselves from all those Doubts and Scruples which usher in Atheism and Prophaneness; and, in a Word, you will find Religion the true Standard of Discretion, the effectual Instrument of private and publick Good, and the infallible Guide to Honour and Happiness.

NEXT to the Knowledge of Religion, follows the Knowledge of the World, which may be divided into the Knowledge of Matters and Men, which is so necessary in every Part, in every Act of Life, but especially of a publick one, that I cannot but wonder at the Vanity of such as can fancy it possible to fill any Station honourably or happily without it. The Confidence of other wretched Projectors, seems to me Modesty, compared to the Shamelessness of such Men as obtrude themselves upon Affairs of a publick Nature, un-

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studied,

studied, unvers'd in Things of Men, that is, totally unqualified; which whoever considers the Difficulty of managing them well, or the mischievous Consequences of miscarrying in them, must confess. Let the Gentleman therefore study the Laws of the Realm, its Changes and Revolutions in their Causes, Progress, and Effects, its Natural and Political Strengths and Weaknesses, Defects and Excellencies, together with its Foreign Interests, Relation and Dependencies; nor let him be wholly ignorant of the Frame and Policy of other Kingdoms, tho' he ought to be best vers'd in our own; he must travel Abroad, but dwell at Home; for I would have him have a Veneration, not Superstition, for the Laws and Customs of his own Country; I doubt the Wisdom of our own Nation is not great enough to justify the Neglect, much less Contempt of that of Foreign Ones. And because what they call the Law of Nature is only the Law of right Reason, in those great Precepts of it, which seem immutable and inviolable, and the same in all Times and Places: He ought not to be a Stranger to this, lest being ignorant of the true Grounds of human Society, and of the Nature and Obligation of particular Laws, every new Emergency, or Deviation from the common Road, discover his Insufficiency; for it is a miserable Thing to see how, through the Weakness of some, and the Subtilty of others, Laws which should be the Fences and Bulwarks of the People, are often made their Chains and Fetters; and those publick and solemn Ties which were designed to strengthen the Constitution, become the most fatal Engines of undermining and subverting it.

AFTER all, that I may not seem to be treating rather of Speculation than Action, and to have pro-

proposed such Knowledge, as if I were recommending rather a Life of Study than of Business, I must put you in Mind, that the Design of this Sort of Learning ought to make Men wise, not subtle; judicious, not disputative: That Curiosity or Diligence in Matters minute or subtle, has more in it of Amusement than Use, and that to lay the Foundation too deep and broad, does seldom quit the Cost; and in a Word, it seems to me to be in Policy, as in Religion, he is the most prudent who best understands the particular Laws of his particular Station, as he is the most religious who is best learned, not in the universal Scheme of Theology, but in the Regulation of his own Affections, and the Conduct of his own Life.

BUT in vain does he study Things who knows not Men; for Man is the Instrument of Power and Policy, and whoever knows how to manage and gain an Ascendant over him, is the most considerable in his Country, and able to do the greatest Mischief, or the greatest Good: But when I talk of knowing Men, I mean not only such a Knowledge of particular Persons as may instruct you what to hope, or what to fear from them, what Employments or Trusts they are fit or unfit for; and, in a Word, who are proper or improper Instruments in different Affairs, Times, and Circumstances; but also the Knowledge of human Nature, to be thoroughly read in all the Springs and Resorts of human Actions, in all the various Passions and Diseases of the Mind of Man, with all their Causes and Cures, and to be able to distinguish the genuine and natural, from the acquired and artificial Person. And because not single Persons only, but Times and Ages, Nations, Cities, and lesser Bodies and

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Societies,

Societies, have their particular Temper and Genius, these must not be neglected neither. This is the Knowledge, which, together with a dextrous Application of it, is the very Life and Soul of true Policy; but after all, both with Respect to the Publick, and a Man's own Good, that ought to be a Rule for the Man of Business which St. Paul prescribes for a Bishop, *Let him first learn to rule his own House well.* He that will be truly wise, should know himself first, ere he goes about to know the World, and begin the Practice of his Politicks in his own Family, and in the due Administration of his domestick Affairs, in which, if he cannot succeed, I must confess I cannot see what Encouragement either Prince or People can have to confide in such a one; for the Disorders of a private Fortune are very ominous Presages of a Male-Administration of publick Trust. Nor can I see what can induce such a Man to undertake it, but the mere Hopes of repairing his private Diliapidations with the Stones and Timber of the Publick.

BUT after all, how necessary soever I account Knowledge in a Gentleman engaged in an active Station, yet I cannot but observe, that whether we regard the Publick or the Private, Wickedness has ever been more fatal to both, than Ignorance; and all Trusts have suffered more in the Hands of the False and the Base, than of the Unfit and Insufficient: Therefore,

Secondly, THE Gentleman ought to be enriched with Virtues, especially those which become his Rank and Station. Knowledge is but the Seed of Virtue, and like that, it only rots and putrifies, if it grow not up into excellent Habits, and bring forth Fruits of virtuous Actions. There is scarce
any,

any Station which does not require a particular Virtue, either to discharge or adorn it; one Patience, another Courage, a third Vigilance; there being scarce any Office or Business which is not liable to some particular Inconveniences and Temptations: But it being impossible for me to prosecute all these, I will only insist on two or three which are essential to all true Greatness, and, if I am not much mistaken, to a happy and prosperous Dispatch of all Affairs, I am sure to the Security and Felicity of the Publick and Private; these are Integrity, Magnanimity, Humanity.

By Integrity I mean two Things, Justice and Truth; the first to regulate our Actions, the second our Words. Nor do I take Justice in a beggarly Sense, as if the Gentleman had acquitted himself well enough, if there were any plausible Pretence to excuse a Violation or Omission of a Duty; as if he were to regard more what the Law could compel, than what Honour did oblige him to; and by Honour I mean the Testimony of his own Conscience, both concerning his impartial Enquiries after the right, and Sincerity in pursuing it; for I would not have him appear to do right, rather out of the Fear of Infamy, than Love of Virtue.

THE Word of a Gentleman ought to be fixed and immoveable as Fate, sacred and inviolable as the Altar. Contracts, and Evidences, and Seals, and Oaths, were devised to tie Fools, and Knaves, and Cowards: Honour and Conscience are the more firm and sacred Ties of Gentlemen. Nor must this Honour extend only to private Dealings, but much more to publick; in which, good God! how noble is it to see Integrity triumphing over Interest

Interest and Passion? To see a great Man preferring Truth and Justice to the Menaces of Princes, and readily quitting all Interest, and all Parties, to support the publick Safety and Honour, or fall with it. But as heroick as I would have a Gentleman be, I would not have him led or imposed upon by empty Noise and Names. If he love a good Name, much more a good Conscience, for I would have him as judicious as resolved, as bright and luminous as brave and inflexible: I admire not an Integrity that bids Defiance to Prudence and right Reason; I love a steady Faith and immoveable Justice, but not Romance and Fancy; I would have a great Man not insensible of a Difference between Loyalty and Slavery, between Tyranny and Anarchy; and in the same Manner he must be able to distinguish between a serpentine Subtlety, a stupid Insufficiency, and Want of necessary Address and Dexterity; without such a Competency of Knowledge, all will be Folly, not Integrity; Vanity, not Constancy.

As there is an Integrity in Action, so is there in Speech too, which seems not to consist in bare Truth only, but also in an ingenuous Openness and Freedom; Cloudiness and Ambiguity being rather fit to disguise Ignorance or Design, than to express the Sentiments of a wise or an upright Mind. Yet in Words, as well as Deeds, there is an Extreme; though Frankness and Openness in Conversation, like a free and a generous Air, become a Gentleman, I would not have Freedom violate Discretion; too many and wide Apertures, if they add Beauty, certainly diminish the Strength of a Building.

THE next Virtue befitting a Gentleman is Magnanimity: By which I do not mean an empty Tumour,

Tumour, but solid Greatness of Mind, which ought to discover itself in every Instance of his Life; I say in every Instance, for I count it not enough to bear Disappointments with Moderation, unless he bear his Success so too: I count it not enough to encounter Dangers with Courage, unless he encounter his Pleasures with as great; and in a Word, there ought to be something even in his Entertainments, as well as in his Business, that may speak the Strength, and Wealth, and Self-sufficiency of his Mind. You will easily conclude this with me, if you allow these two or three Things to be essential to true Greatness of Mind; an invincible Courage and Resolution, a rational and generous Activity, and an enlarged and publick Spirit; which you cannot but allow, unless you think the Coward and Slave, the Sluggard or Sot, the Sordid and Selfish, may be reckoned among the Magnanimous. But what Principle, what Foundation is able to support so mighty a Weight? Natural Courage may make a Man brave Danger, or if that will not, Ambition may; while it presents him with a more formidable Evil if he turn his Back upon the other; but what shall make the Man modest and humble in his Triumphs, who was gallant and daring in Fight? Passion and Revenge may make Men firm and fierce in their Contests, but what can make a Man forgive when he is in a Condition to revenge an Injury? The Lust of Power, and Honour, and Wealth, that is, Self-love, may render a Man active and industrious; but what is it that can prevail with him to sacrifice his own Interest, and his Family's, to publick Good? Nothing but Religion: This then is the only Basis on which Magnanimity can stand. This, as it will secure us against Errors, so will it against the Inconstancy and Injustice of the World: This will minister

nister sufficient Motives to generous Actions, when we meet nothing but Discouragements from all Things else: This, if it will not make a publick Employment honourable, will always make it safe: This, if it cannot render Retirement pleasant, in all the Changes of Times and Humours, will preserve a Man steady and calm in himself.

BUT whilst I recommend Magnanimity, I must not forget that there are Follies and Vices which often usurp its Name. I never thought the Love of our Country imply'd a Neglect, much less a Contempt of our private Fortune: That a vain Confidence or Presumption in provoking Dangers ought to pass for Courage: nor do I think that a violent Intrusion into Business, or an indiscreet intangling a Man's self in much, or engaging in any that is foreign and impertinent, deserves the Name of Industry and Activity; or Pride, Stiffness and Savageness, the Name of Firmness and Constancy; for I would have Magnanimity rather lovely than haughty, rather revered than dreaded: Therefore,

HUMANITY is the next Virtue to be aimed at. Nothing can be more fitly joined with Magnanimity than Compassion, with Courage than Tenderness, nor with the Felicity of a great Fortune, than Charity or Bounty. I cannot think that there is a truer Character of Greatness, than to be a Sanctuary to the Injured, a Patron to Virtue, a Counsellor to those that err, and a Support to the Afflicted, the Needy, and Defenceless. In these Things consist the Life and Substance of Humanity, the ornamental Part of it is Affability or Courteousness.

THE Art of Behaviour lies in a narrow Compass, the whole Skill of it consisting in obliging, which he shall never miss, who has once possessed his Soul with Tenderness and Goodness; for then every Word, every Action, together with the whole Air of Deportment, will be animated with a resistless Sweetness, and will be nothing else but the Portraiture and Expression of those excellent Dispositions. By this Means too, the Deportment will be natural, not artificial; and though it be generally kind, it will be more particularly so, where it meets with a more moving Occasion. To which if it be added, that the Carriage of a Gentleman ought to be humble, but not popular, courteous, but not cheap, you will decline all the considerable Errors to which Affability is obnoxious.

It was the Custom of the Ancients to deliver their Instruction in short and plain Sentences, without a laboured Exhortation, or passionate Enforcement. And certainly there is such a commanding Authority in the Dictates of Truth and Wisdom, such a Majesty and Loveliness in solid Virtues, that did the Simplicity and Probity obtain in these, which is supposed to have done in those Times, Advice of this Sort would easily make its Way to the Hearts of Men without the Assistance of any Motives. But I dare not be either so confident of my own Performance, or of the Times, as not to think it necessary to close the Advice of these Paragraphs, with some Arguments and Motives to these Virtues.

SHALL I make Use here of the Topicks of Religion? Shall I invite you to Integrity and Magnanimity, from the Omniscience and Providence
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of God? Shall I put you in Mind how little Sordidness, Falshood and Fear; how little Pride and Insolence, can become the Principles and Persuasions of a Christian, concerning the Emptiness of this World, or the lasting Glory of another? Shall I press you to Humanity, to Meekness and Humility, by calling to your Remembrance the Life of *Jesus*, your Frailty and Mortality; and, what is worse, your Sins and Follies? Shall I shew you how mutable and inconstant your Fortune is; and if it were not, how inconsiderable a Distinction this makes between you and Persons of lower Rank? And that they stand at least upon the same Level with you, in respect of the substantial and solid Interests of human Nature, that is, the Favour of God, Virtue, Grace, and Glory? Alas! I am afraid you have generally but little Relish of this Sort of Arguments.

BUT have you as little Value for your Country, as Religion? Are you as little moved by the Ruin of this, as the Corruption of that? Behold your Country once formidable abroad, and well compact within; ah! now what Reproach does it not suffer abroad? What Convulsions at home? Its Wealth has neither Service nor Defence in it. Its Numbers are without Courage, and its Forces have nothing of Strength or Terror in them. Why all this? It bleeds in your Factions and Divisions, it reels and staggers under your Softness and Luxury; it is betrayed by your Falshood and Cowardise: Ah! that its Reformation might begin where its Degeneracy has, and that it might recover by your Virtues, the Honour it has lost and forfeited by your Vices! Pardon me, I do not here suppose that there are none exempt from this Accusation; that in the Body of the Nobility and Gentry there are not,

not, even in this degenerate Age, some Instances of a true *English* Courage and Integrity: I only wish that there were more, that there were enough to atone for the rest, and to prop this declining State. Nor is it a petulant Humour, but a Zeal for your Honour particularly, as well as that of the Nation, that now acts me; for give me Leave to put you in Mind at Length,

THAT your Honour, your Interest, and your Happiness depend upon your Integrity, Magnanimity, and Humanity; nor is it possible that the one should survive without the other.

First, YOUR Honour. The whole World is possessed in Favour of these Virtues; and however it hath fared with some other, these have ever been in Vogue, not amongst the best only, but worst of Mankind. Some have openly defended Intemperance and Incontinence, but I think none ever yet in Earnest undertook the Patronage of Cowardice, Perfidiousness, Inhumanity, or Insolence. I have never yet met with any, who have not thought it scandalous and reproachful to find less Faith, less Honour, less Goodness, or if you please, more Cowardice, Falshood, and Sordidness in his Lordship, or his Worship, than in a Groom or Lackey. Nor did I ever find, that Lands and Scutcheons, and honourable Ancestors, were looked upon as Mitigations, but rather Aggravations of such Baseness and Degeneracy; nor could any Man ever think it a Commendation to be the Sink and Sewers of a noble Family, the Ruin of an antient, and once stately Pile, or the Lees and Dregs of a rich Liquor long since drawn off, and evapourated. Nor does your *Honour* only, but,

Secondly, YOUR *Interest* depend on these Virtues. If you want these, I see not what you can possess, that can either gain you the Favour of the Prince, or Esteem of the People : This sure is the Reason why these Virtues have ever been in such Credit in the World, because their Influence is so necessary, so universally serviceable, whether to the Publick, or to Friends and Dependents. That Integrity which can give others Ground to rely upon you, than Generosity and Magnanimity which raise their Hopes and Expectations, naturally give you an Authority and Ascendant over them, and you become the Master of their Lives and Fortunes, whilst they promise themselves the Protection or Improvement of them from your Virtues : To these then you must owe the Patronage and Confidence of those above you, the Dependence, Love, and Esteem of those below you, without which, what can you enjoy truly great and considerable ? You are impotent and contemptible as Ploughmen and Sailors, when solitary and abandon'd ; your Retinue and Dependence, your Friends and Admirers make you powerful : In short, a Man of Birth and Fortune that is perfidious, cowardly, selfish and proud, has not, in my Judgment, or deserves not to have, half the Interest an honest Yeoman or plain-dealing Tradesman has in City or Country ; for what Confidence can be placed in such a one ? Will he be tender of the Honour of his Country, or his Friend, who has no Sense of his own ? Or will he ever be a good Patron or Friend, who is ready to sacrifice all to his Avarice ? Nor is it a Matter of small Importance, that Reputation founded in Virtue surmounts all Sorts of Difficulties, and crowns all Undertakings with Success ; and since Men are naturally backward when they are jealous and distrustful, but prompt and forward where they are secure and confident ;

ident; it has ever been observed, that Integrity (if not destitute of competent Prudence) has in Dispatch of Affairs out-stripped Craft and Subtlety. But the weightiest Consideration of all is, that these Virtues, if they be not the surest Foundation of Greatness, are doubtless of Happiness; for they will make a Man find a Tranquility in his Mind, when he cannot in Fortune: The Conscience of a Man's Uprightness will alleviate the Toil of Business, and sweeten the Harshness of Disappointments, and give him an humble Confidence before God, when the Ingratitude of Man, or the Iniquity of Times, rob him of all other Reward.

HAVING thus given an Account of these two Things, wherein consist the Sufficiency of a Man of Business, that is, Knowledge and Virtue, I will proceed to the Consideration of the *Third Rule*.

THE Gentleman ought to be constant, resolved and vigorous in his Motion. Constancy and Vigour, whether in the Acquisition of Knowledge, or Improvement of Virtue, or Management of Affairs, are of the greatest Importance. I ever prefer a strong before a fine Edge; Industry and Resolution, before Wit and Parts: He that makes a daily Progress, how slow soever it be, will in Time reach his Stage; vast Bodies and mighty Armies, by constant Marches, have travelled through those unknown Regions, which a single Person would almost despair of compassing in his Life-time. To what a Height does the Tree raise its Head, tho' its Root fix in the Heart of the Earth? Because though it grow slowly, and even imperceptibly, yet it grows constantly, and receives some Accession every Moment. This Rule, as I insinuated before, is applicable to Knowledge, Virtue, and

Business. To Knowledge. To what would not an ingenious Person, furnished with all Aids of Science, advance his Prospect, if he used but moderate Industry, and proceeded regularly? What could there be in any Science, which were either of any Use, or any Certainty, that could escape him? And other Things ought not to stop him; they may be his Diversion, but ought not to be his Study. I believe there are but few Natures but are capable, if not of eminent Accomplishment, yet of such Improvement as may render them considerable and useful, if they would apply themselves to the Study of Knowledge with any tolerable Vigour, or exert their Vigour with any Regularity and Uniformity; It is owing to Laziness and Wantonness, that the Slow and Heavy attain not to such Abilities as might make them shew tolerably well: And it is to the same that the Quick and Witty owe their Want of Solidity and Judgment while they discover only enough to make the World justly condemn them, as wanting to themselves and their Country, being bad Stewards of an improvable Estate, ill Masters of good Parts.

NOR is Constancy less serviceable in the Pursuit of Virtue than of Knowledge. Virtue, when acquired, is confessed by all to be easy and delightful; but to acquire it, this is the Difficulty, but it is such a one as Constancy and Courage would easily vanquish.

LET us suppose Man infected in his Nature, and what is worse, over-run by vicious Habits; yet even then the same Care, Watchfulness, and Discipline that cures a Chronical Distemper of the Body, would heal an habitual Disease of the Mind; and one may reform and enrich a degenerate

rate Mind with as little Pains as it will cost to recover a decayed Estate.

BUT let me return to my main Subject, that is, the Conduct of Civil Business. Here, I am sure, an uniform Constancy and regular Vigour is exacted by all. I have seldom observed Men of great Ability do great Things without great Diligence and Resolution. I am sure I have seen them miscarry foully, when Persons of lower Talents have succeeded very well. Nay, the Truth is, Vigour and Resolution are such noble Characters, that whoever appears endowed with them, can never himself miscarry, though his Designs sometimes may; he generally appears a great Man, even in the most unfortunate Accidents, and makes ill Success itself attest his Sufficiency. But commonly Difficulties give Way to the Diligence and Resolution of great Men; and if To-day will not, To-morrow will smile upon their Enterprizes. There are lucky Minutes, when what before had Wind and Tide against it, moves with the Stream. Whither will not he then carry his Point, who never lets slip the lucky Moment through Negligence, and never fails through Cowardice or Laziness to urge and push on his good Success?

BUT how much soever Vigour and Constancy be commended, as most serviceable to Success in Business, as one of the greatest Perfections that Man is capable of, and the best Instrument of attaining all others, yet we must not forget that the Strength of our Nature is soon broken if it be always strained; and the finest Parts are soon tired if they be incessantly employed; that Man has a Design to carry on far nobler and more important than this of Civil Business, and that so far at least the Pleasures of Life are to be mingled with its

Toils and Troubles, as to enable us the better to undergo them. Therefore,

Fourthly, THE Gentleman's Time ought not to be so wholly taken up in Business, as not to leave Vacancies for Religion, Meditation, Friendship, and Diversion. They are two Extremes fatal to Happiness, to have no Business at all, or so much as leaves no Room for Books or Friends, for Meditation or necessary Diversion; for this makes Life very barren and very dull, it makes Business mere Drudgery, and places the great Man in a more toilsome Condition than the mean one. Nor is this the only Evil of an uninterrupted Pursuit of worldly Business; but what is worse, it extinguishes all Relish of heavenly Things, and instead of the Courage and Peace, with which Religion inspires Men, it leaves them without any rational Support or Comfort, either consuming with perplexed and anxious Thoughts about the Event of Things, or hardened into a Neglect, if not Contempt of Religion, proposing to themselves no other or higher End of Life than the acquitting themselves well in the Station they are in, and ascribing the Issue of Affairs to no other Providence than such as they are daily wont to employ about them.

WHEN I demand a vacant Time for Religion, it must not be supposed that I do not look upon Religion as the first and greatest Business of Life; it being in vain to gain the whole World for him who loses his Soul, or to be intent in advancing the Peace and Welfare of the Publick, for him whose Mind is filled with Disorder and Guilt. I therefore suppose all the Actions of the Day, so conducted, as to become Instances of Christian Virtue; I suppose Justice and Integrity, Courage and Boun-

after HAPPINESS:

ty, Patience and Gentleness, mingling themselves in the Discharge of every Civil Business. And then the Religion for which I demand some vacant Moments, is that of publick and private Devotion, without which it is impossible for the great Man either to preserve Reputation without, or Peace within. Publick Devotion is not only an Act of Worship due to GOD, but, in a Gentleman, a Testimony of the Honour which he has for the Community He is of, and an Expression of Charity towards those who are influenced by his Example. Nor is private Devotion less necessary than publick, not only because publick without private degenerates in Formality, into a mere Shew without the Power of Godliness; nor yet because every Man's Reputation flows first from his Domesticks, who can have no great Veneration for him, who appears to have none for his GOD; but especially because every Man has particular Wants and particular Obligations, and none more than the great One; and therefore must offer up to GOD his particular Petitions and Prayers. I cannot therefore tell how to think, that he who does not begin and close the Day with Prayers to GOD, can believe there is one; he that does not invoke Providence, seems to defy it; and he who sacrificeth not to GOD, sacrifices only to his own Nets.

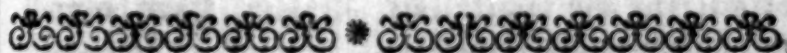
As to Meditation, it is so essential a Part of Religion and so indispensable a Preparative for Devotion, that I should not have placed it here by itself, did I not extend its Design something further. Meditation is that Act, which of all others, does most delight and nourish the Mind, which, of all others, is most fit to raise and to strengthen it. In other Actions we seem to move mechanically, in this alone rationally. In all other, our Reason seems confined and fettered by, I know not what
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Prescriptions, Customs, and Circumstances; in this alone it seems to enjoy its native Freedom, with delight stretching and dilating itself. In all other Things, the Mind seems to be impressed and moulded by the Matter and Business about which it is conversant; but in this it gives what Forms and Circumstances it pleases to both; in this it has a Kind of creative Power, and I know not what Sort of Despotick Sovereignty. In a Word, he who is Ignorant of the Force of Meditation, is a Stranger to the truest Pleasure of human Life. The Use of Meditation consists either in Reflection or Preparation, as regarding alike Yesterday and To-morrow. It is highly necessary that he look back upon his Day past, who lies under so many Temptations to waste it, that he whose Actions are of so much greater Importance than those of private Men, and fall unavoidably under a more general and severe Censure, do the more carefully scan them over. Nor is Preparation less necessary than Reflection, for this gives Order to your Affairs, and forms the Mind into a fit and just Disposition; it prevents Surprizes, removes Difficulties, and gives Beauty and Steadiness to your whole Conduct.

As to Friendship and Diversion, I shall speak but a Word of them here. It is a hard Matter, for great Men to have sincere Friends, but this being a Purchase of so great a Value, deserves they should lay out all their Art and Interest upon it. For besides the Advantage of Friendship in every Condition, that it clears our Notions, corrects our Errors, confirms our Virtues, enlarges our Joys, and lessens our Troubles; it is to Men in an eminent Station more peculiarly necessary, both as the Ornament and Support of their Fortune.

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As to Diversion, it ever must be such as may consist with the Dignity of the Person, such as may not lessen his Character, or waste his Time; such as may refresh and recruit Nature, and from which he may return to his Business with new Vigour and new Appetite, and it were very well, if Diversions were so wisely contrived, that they might at once delight and improve the Mind: I should therefore think that Physick or Husbandry, Musick, Architecture, and such like, might be proper Entertainments of vacant Hours: But if the Health of the Body, as well as Pleasure of the Mind be aimed at in Diversion, it were well to have always ready some wise Friends, by whose Help and Conversation, the Time you bestow upon the Health of the Body, may not be utterly lost to the Mind.



C H A P. III.

Of the Trading Life.

Sect. 1. *Rules relating to Success in Trade.*

Sect. 2. *Rules relating to his Religion.*

MY latter Years have been spent mostly among the Trading Part of Mankind, and I have received many Obligations from them, and I think myself bound to do them this Right, to let the World know, that I have found more Honour and Gratitude, more Clearness and Integrity amongst this Sort of Men, than I ever could amongst others, whose Quality and Education raised my Expectations higher; it will be therefore no small Satisfaction

tion to me, if any Endeavours of mine, can render them any Service.

THERE is no Condition of Life free from Temptations and Difficulties, and therefore neither this of Trades. The Evils they are subject to may be reduced to two Heads, their miscarrying in Trade, or in Religion. I will therefore begin with such Rules as may serve to prevent the former, and proceed to such as concern the latter.

If we Trace the Ruin of such as fail or break, back to its Original, we shall find it generally to be either Idleness or Pride. Idleness, the Parent of all Sottish Vices; Pride, the Parent of expensive Follies and ruinous Projects. I will therefore lay down these two Rules as the Foundation of the Trader's Secular Prosperity. *First*, That he must be diligent and industrious. *Secondly*, That he must not be above his Profession.

I. HE must be diligent and industrious. You seem born for Industry; and though some pretend to be sent into the World only to enjoy a Fortune; it is plain you are first to raise one; and tho' there may be some fortunate Men in the World, that seem to thrive rather by Chance than Virtue, yet, in the ordinary Methods of Providence, Diligence and Industry are the High-way to Wealth and Plenty. And I know not with what Confidence Men can promise themselves the Blessing and Favour of God on any other Terms. He has made nothing to be idle and useless: The heavenly Bodies never cease to yield their Light and Influence, nor the terrestrial ones their Fruit. We ourselves subsist by a continual Motion; and should our Blood and Spirits grow dull and sluggish, our Life must needs expire with their Activity. *Man is born to Labour*

as the Sparks fly upward; our Capacities and Endowments destine and urge us to it, the Necessities and Wants of this needy State, (in which Nature, how kind soever it was to the Golden Age, does not furnish us with any Thing, without Art and Industry) exact and demand it, and the Laws of human Society oblige us to it; for it is but fit that every one should contribute for the Entertainment of the Publick, and that he should not, like a Drone, be feasted and maintained by the labour and travel of others.

AND so far, lastly, is Christianity from abrogating the Law of Nature, that it earnestly inforces it, *Let ours learn to maintain good Works for necessary Uses, that they be not unfruitful*; that is, that they be not a Shame and burden to themselves and Families, to the Commonwealth or Christian Profession. Propose not then, (I address myself here to Beginners) propose not to exempt yourselves from that universal Law of Labour to which the whole Creation is subjected; you especially who lie under more immediate and particular Obligations to it.

It is an unaccountable Folly for one, who is to make his Fortune in the World, to apply himself to Trade, rather as a Diversion than Business, and to design it only as a Support for Sloth and Luxury: It is Madness in any one to propose to be Master of his Time ere he be Master of his Trade, and to indulge his Pleasures before he has made Provision to defray the Expence of them. And yet this, I doubt, is too general a Practice; whereas would young Men consider the Matter aright, they would find that they do but make their Troubles and Vexations endless, by indulging their Ease and Laziness.

Secondly,

Secondly, THE Trader must not be above his Calling. Pride and Vanity are generally sworn Enemies, both to the Content and Prosperity of Traders. They either tempt him to despise and neglect his Trade, or put him upon Expences which it cannot maintain, and engage him in bold or hazardous Projects. These I would fain reform; and methinks a few sober Reflections should here prevail: What, can it be Sense to make a Shew Abroad at the Expence of your Content and Peace at Home? Is it not much better to be modest and safe, to be humble and at Ease, than to suffer daily Anxieties and Perplexities, and to have your Mind always upon the Rack, how to answer the Importunities of Pride and Vanity? It is worse yet, when a short Piece of Pageantry ends in perpetual Infamy, when this impotent Humour is nourished by Robbery and Injustice, by Fraud and Cheats. I must confess, I am amazed to think that any one should be pleased by a false and fatal Grandeur, upheld only by Wrong, and resolving in a Moment into indelible Shame and irretrievable Ruin. For my Part, I should in this Case look upon Bravery, not as the Mark of Greatness, but Ornament of a Sacrifice; not as the Pomp of a Triumph, but a Funeral. As to those who scorn their Profession, I have but this to say, Let them find out a more thriving one before they leave the old one; before they desert the Profession they were bred to for its Meanness, let them make sure of a more honourable Employment, or else the Scorn they load their Trade with, will be Want of Sense, not Greatness of Spirit; a lazy Pride, not a generous Ambition; and if so, I am sure there is no Profession so mean as that of Sloth and Looseness.

Self. 2. THE second Sort of Rules are such as concern the Religion of the Trader or Artisan; for it

it is to little Purpose that he thrive in his Secular, if he run out in his Christian Calling. Therefore,

First, HE must be sure that his Calling be lawful.

Secondly, THAT it be carried on with Truth, Justice, and Charity.

Thirdly, THAT his Attendance on the Business of this World, do not extinguish his Concern for a better.

Fourthly, THAT he propose to himself proper and rational Ends of Trading.

First, HE must be sure that his Calling be lawful; that is, such as is neither forbidden by any Law of GOD, or the Magistrate, nor does in its own Nature minister to Vice. But that I may not perplex Mens Minds with unnecessary Scruples, you must know some Things minister to Sin directly and necessarily, others only accidentally, not by the Intention of the Artist or Trader, but the Abuse of others. The former Sort of Trades are unlawful in themselves, and no Pretence can sanctify the Use of them; he that directly ministers to a Sin, communicates in the Guilt of it, as he that purveys for the Lust of others, partakes of the Sin of the Adulterer and Fornicator; but those which minister not immediately, but accidentally, are yet in themselves lawful; nor shall the Trader communicate in those Abuses to which the Lusts and Vanities of others prostitute them: Thus Taverns are not unlawful, because abused by Intemperance; nor are all Shops of Cloathing to be shut, because thence People furnish themselves with such Things as inflame their Immodesty and Pride: The Reason

is plainly this, because the Sin may be separated from the Trade: That Wine, whose full Draughts are by some made Use of to the defacing Reason, and enkindling Lust, may as well refresh the Weary and delight the Moderate. The Inconvenience would be insufferable, if every Profession which did but indirectly and casually administer to Vice, were therefore sinful: The Courts of Justice must be laid aside, because often the Bar and Bench have contributed to oppress and rob in Form of Law: The Pulpit must be for ever silenced, because Men have sometimes sown the Seeds of Sedition. Yet here it must be confessed, that the more or less Tendency any Trade hath to the promoting Vice, it is in the same Proportion the more or less eligible. And that it imports Men, who love their Peace and Happiness more than Gain, not to debauch their Callings by prostituting them to Extravagancies and Exorbitances, and projecting Profit from the Intemperances and Sins, that is, the Ruin of others; for it is not sufficient to the Peace and Comfort of a Man's Mind that his Calling be innocent, if his Conduct of it be not so too.

Secondly, TRADE ought to be managed with Truth, Justice, and Charity; for without these it is only a more cleanly Art of Cheating or Oppression; Sins which I doubt can receive but little Excuse or Mitigation from the Custom and Practice of them: Without these, Trade cannot be regular and easy, nor Gain comfortable and delightful; since no Man can have any Confidence in the Protection of GOD, when the Methods of his Thriving are such as merit Vengeance, not a Blessing. Nor can I see any Thing that can betray Men into Lying and Knavery, but the Want of true Sense, as well as true Faith; since tho' many have enriched themselves, yet it is evident the Wealth which is
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more regularly purchased is more pleasant and lasting; and that honest and equitable Dealing is the surest, if not the speediest Way to Wealth. Nor are there, I believe, many Instances of Men, who if they understood their Business, have ever suffered much by their Integrity in Dealing, it being very hard to imagine, that a Trader should be a Loser by those Virtues which advance Credit and Reputation: But however this be, I am not now enquiring after Wealth, but Happiness, to the Obtainment of which I am very positive that the Observation of these Measures is indispensable, since the contrary must needs pervert the Mind, and entangle Life; and as they extinguish in the Soul all Sparks of Honour and Greatness, so must they its Courage and Confidence, Tranquility and Peace, which can result from nothing but the due Moderation of our Affections, and the Conscience of our Integrity.

Thirdly, THE Trader's Attendance on his Calling must not discharge him from his Attendance on Religion. It is true, that the Duty of every one's secular Calling is a Part of Religion; but this ought to be well understood, that so neither a Veneration for Religion breed a Neglect of your Callings, nor an over-fond Opinion of the Merit of Industry in your Calling, as if all Virtue were comprised in it, breed a Contempt of Religion. It is fit therefore to put you in Mind, that Arts and Trades have not in themselves any direct or immediate Tendency, either to the Improvement of Reason, or the Production of Virtue; they minister to the Necessities of this World, not the Glories of another. Nor are they so much the Works of a rational and spiritual, as of a mortal and indigent Being. From whence it follows, that though they are necessary to the present State of Things,

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yet can they deserve to employ you no longer than either the publick Benefit or private Convenience require it; and that you are then only wisely taken up about these, when neither your Endowments nor Fortunes capacitate you for a Life more immediately and directly serviceable to the Purposes of Reason and Revelation. Finally, that the Works of a secular Profession are then only acceptable Sacrifices to GOD, when consecrated by wise Principles and Virtues cleaving to and mingling with them. Do not therefore think that a Pretence of Business can cancel your Obligations to the Duties of Christianity.

If a Man could fancy, which I never can, Business and Religion incompatible, it is evident which were to be preferred, since if the Will of GOD were so, it is much better to be starved than to be damned: But without carrying the Matter so far, it is plain, that Virtue and Religion, with a Competency, render Men abundantly more happy than Wealth can do, if attended with the Neglect or Contempt of either; it is the Riches of the Mind makes Men great and happy; the Ignorant and Irreligious can never be either. Let no Man therefore think that he suffers any Damage, if he be forced to maintain his Religion by the Diminution of his Trade; though I cannot comprehend that there can be a Necessity of this; for I have never yet observed any Man so over charged with Business, as not to find Time for Pleasure, when he has pretended he could find none for Religion.

In a Word, the Neglect of Religion is capable of no Excuse, not only because your future, but present Happiness depends upon it. Modesty or Moderation to curb a vain and ambitious Thirst of Wealth; Faith or Confidence in the Providence of
GOD,

GOD, to restrain you from mean, base, and unlawful Courses; Self-Resignation to prevent Anxiety, and those Fears to which the Uncertainties, Changes, and Revolutions of Times and Trade make Men subject, seem to me as necessary to the Peace and Happiness of a Trader, as a competent Stock, Industry or Skill, can be to his worldly Prosperity: And though Men, who allow themselves no Time, either for Attendance upon publick Religion, or private Meditation, may talk finely of these Virtues, it is impossible they should be really possessed of them: *How can he get Wisdom that boldeth the Plough, and that glorieth in the Goad, that driveth Oxen, and is occupied in their Labours, and whose Talk is of Bullocks?* which the Author of *Ecclesiasticus*, by a Parity of Reason, extends further to all Traders and Artisans, who are in like Manner wholly taken up in their Art. I could therefore wish that those Words of our Saviour, *What shall it profit a Man, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul*, were wrote in capital Letters in the most conspicuous Place of the Counting-House, and the Shop, that you might ever and anon be put in Mind, that there is one Thing more necessary, than the diligent Management of your Trade, namely Religion: For to what Purpose is it that your Books are well kept, that there is Order and Regularity in the whole Conduct of your Trades, if at the same Time your neglected Hearts lie like the Field of the Sluggard, waste and open, and over-grown with Briars and Thorns; or like a confused and entangled Stock of an unskilful Trader, which wastes and decays each Day? To what Purpose is it that you be punctual Dealers towards Men, if you be Bankrupts towards GOD? To what Purpose is it that you have Credit and Honour upon the Change, if you be poor and beggarly, shameful and sneaking in yourselves, having

your Souls destitute of any true Peace, Wealth, or Courage?

AH! while you pursue the World, forget not that there is a Heaven; and while you make Provision for Time, make some too for Eternity: Let your stating your Accompts with Men, put you in Mind of clearing your Accompts with GOD; and let these two Things never be out of your Thoughts, *First*, That it is GOD who gives Man Power to get Wealth; and next, That it is not a clear Estate, but a clear Soul, that makes Man happy; I mean, a Soul freed from silly and vile Affections, and enriched with the Knowledge and Love of GOD.

Fourthly, THE Trader must propose to himself proper and rational Ends of Trading: For whoever proposes to himself vain and false ones, will entangle his Life in manifold Troubles and Temptations, and lose his Reason, Religion, and Tranquility, in the Windings and Mazes of wretched Fancies, and unaccountable Projects. The Ends of Trading I take to be these three:

First, A COMPETENT and honest Support of yourselves and Families.

Secondly, A CHARITABLE Succour and Relief of others.

Thirdly, A TIMELY Retreat from a secular Calling, to a private Life.

First, A COMPETENT and honest Support of yourselves and Families. This End is pointed out by the Apostle, *Tit. iii. 14.* and called necessary Uses; *i. e.* we must design in Trade the Support of

of the Necessities, not Lusts of Nature. Nor is your Care here limited to your own Necessities only, but those also of your Children and Posterity; but then, lest under this Pretence you extend your Desires beyond Bounds, you are to remember, that in resolving the Measures of this Provision, you are not to take Counsel of your own Ambition, or the wanton Expectations of your Children. That Provision for them is wisest, which lays a sufficient Foundation for their Industry to build on, and leaves them under an Obligation to Business and Employment. And is not this enough? To what Purpose should Men toil, cark, and pinch, to make their Families rich and great, that is, lazy and wanton? to leave behind them an Estate which their own Example proves more than necessary? For most of those that do so, have made little Use of it themselves. Mistake me not; I do not think it unlawful to be rich, or to leave one's Family so; but I think it foolish and unlawful too, to sacrifice the Peace of one's Mind, and the Ease of one's Life, to the Lust of Riches: I think it silly and vicious to raise a Family by Meanness and Sordidness, or to lay the Foundation of Children's Greatness in one's own Infamy. You may receive temporal good Things with Gratitude, and enjoy them with Moderation; but if you dote upon them, you violate the Vow of your Baptism, and virtually renounce your Faith: For would not this be to forget that Heaven were your Kingdom and Country, and Earth the Place of your Exile, or at best, Pilgrimage?

THIS is a Lesson that can never be too often inculcated, not only on the Account of that violent Opposition it is almost every where encountered with; but also the vast Importance it is of, to the Quiet and Contentment of a trading Life. This.
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one Thing is the Philosophy the Trader should be ever studying, the Wisdom he should be daily pursuing; that is, a true and just Moderation of his Desires of Wealth. Did Man know how to bound his Desires by the Necessities or Conveniences of Life; could he regulate his Appetites by the Modesty and Moderation of Christianity, not by Custom and Fancy; I am confident this one Thing would rescue him from the far greater Part of Evils and Incumbrances which infest human Life. Vanity and Ambition, Envy and Emulation, Wantonness and Fancy, create most of those Difficulties and Necessities which stain the Beauty, disturb the Peace and Order, and destroy the Pleasure of Life. When Men's Desires and Aims are too big for their Callings, they are unavoidably plunged into Discontent and doubtful Projects; and if they sink not finally into Ruin, they cannot be held up but by such an anxious and restless Prosecution of the World, as looks rather like Hurry or Distraction, than Trade or Employment. I can therefore never think a Tradesman happy, 'till he has Modesty enough to find Content in a moderate and easy Trade; 'till he understands what are the Bounds his Nature and his Station sets him; and though he know how to enjoy a great Fortune, does never want one; has Sense enough to use it, and Virtue enough not to let his Happiness depend upon it.

Secondly, A CHARITABLE Succour and Relief of others. It is confessed by all that Men are born, not for themselves only, but for others too; and God, the Dispenser of temporal Wealth, commands *such as are rich in this World, to be rich in good Works* too; but it is always to be provided, that Justice first take Place, and then Charity. This Direction therefore supposes the Trader's Accompts to stand fair; it supposes him to have discharged the

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the Duties which he owes to his Relatives and Dependants, or else to have none. I will not insist on the Obligation or Pleasure of Charity; I will not press you to it by the Interest of your present or future Happiness; for the Truth is, to do Right to the trading World, there is no Rank or Order of Men in the Kingdom, that is more sensible of the Duty of Charity, or more inclined and disposed to it; none that give more eminent Proofs of it while living, or leave more glorious Monuments of it behind them.

ONE Thing only I will take upon me to recommend to you; that is, the Advice of *Salomon*: *Whatsoever thy Hand findeth to do, do it with thy Might; for there is no Work, nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wisdom in the Grave, whither thou goest*: That is, whatever Good you design to do, do it speedily, and as much as in you lies, be your own Executors. How often are excellent Purposes strangled in the Birth by an unexpected Death? How frequently are they perverted by the Corruption or Negligence of those to whose Inspection they are committed? Besides, this Way you shall reap the Fruit of your own Plantations; you will enjoy the Satisfaction resulting from the Beauty and good Contrivance of the Foundations you have laid, or you will be able to supply the Defects, or correct the Errors of your Model, and prevent those future Miscarriages which such Designs are liable to. Though all this be very much, yet it is but the least Part of what you will reap from being yourselves the Executors of your own Bounty; you will be sure that you dedicate it to Charity, not to Vanity; that you are building Alms-houses for the Living, not Tombs and Pyramids for the Dead; you will escape the common Cheat and Imposture the Rich put upon themselves, while the entangle themselves

themselves in Covetousness all their Lives, under Pretence of designing mighty Things after Death.

Thirdly, THE Tradesman ought to propose to himself a timely Retreat; *i. e.* if the Necessities of this indigent State will give Way to it. It is natural to finish Business ere we finish Life; to lay down our Burden ere we fall under the Weight of it; and quit troublesome Employments, before the bungling Discharge of them proclaim the Decay of our Parts and Strength, and the Increase of our Avarice and Ambition: Nay, the very Continuance of the same Cares for the World, which looked before like Prudence, will in old Age be reckoned Sin and Folly. To trade, is but to make Provision for Life; and therefore since common Sense will tell us, that we must not be always providing for Life, and never live; it is plain Men ought, if they may, at length break off their Trade, or at least so contract it, that it may be rather Diversion than Travail. As *Salomon* sends us to the Ants to learn Industry, so might he to learn Wisdom too: The Enjoyment of their Treasure in the Winter, being no less an Instance of the one, than their Labour in laying it up in the Summer, of the other.

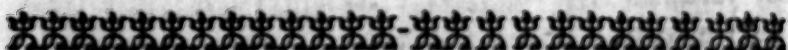
If these Motives seem light, there is another of more Weight behind, that is, the Consideration of your eternal Interest. It is highly necessary to leave the World, before you be torn from it; and to acquaint yourselves more familiarly with another World, before you pass into it for ever. Certainly it requires some Time to prepare the Soul for Death and Judgment; and that Man will be very unfit for either, who is carried from the Counter to the Grave, and from the Entanglements of secular Cares to the Tribunal of GOD. But besides the Benefits which you will find in Retirement, the Prospect of
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it has many in it: The Hopes of a Sabbatick Year in Life, will ease the Weight of those that precede it; and a Design of retreating from Trade and Business, will be apt to induce Men to pass their first Years with more Moderation and Abstinence, that they may the sooner provide the Means of an easy or honourable Retirement.

THESE Rules well observed, would free the trading Life from all the great Evils and Inconveniences it is subject to. Business would be, not the Curse, but the Blessing of Mankind; and Trade would be as innocent, if not as pleasant, as *Adam's* Husbandry in his Garden: For thus Industry would be without Drudgery, and Care without Anxiety; Commerce would be carried on without any mean Artifice, without tormenting Designs, or vexatious Disappointments, What Need would there be of Shifts and Equivocations, of Fraud and Circumvention, if any Man had Faith enough to believe, that God's Blessing upon his Industry, were the only Way to grow truly rich? I mean to get, if not so much as he would, yet as much as would be good for him? What Temptation would a Man lie under to Bondage and Drudgery, or to Perplexity and Anxiety, if he could contain his Desires within those narrow Bounds which Nature and his Station have prescribed him? What Fears could disquiet the Mind, which were formed into an entire Resignation to, and Dependence upon God? Or how could the World ensnare that Soul which allots a proper Time for publick Religion, and private Meditation? In a Word, these Rules being followed, Men would not only avoid the common Rocks on which the Happiness and Fortune of the Trader generally dash, but also attain the End of this Sort of active Life; they would get Estates in their younger Years, and enjoy them in their riper.

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Nay no Portion of Life would want its proper and seasonable Enjoyments; they would in the Midst of Business preserve their Innocence, and when they retired from it, they would perfect that Religion which they could before but begin.



CHAP. IV.

Of a Contemplative Life.

I DO not calculate this Discourse for Students, but for Persons under no Direction but their own; for such, as make their Retreat from the World, tired and sated with it; for those, whose Inclination or Fortune casts them upon a quiet, and private Life: To these, I offer myself a Companion; I would enter with them into their Privacies, and assist them to pass their Hours with true Pleasure and Innocence. I would inspire them, if I could, with wise and excellent Thoughts; I would engage them in the most necessary and most delightful Business, and guard them against those Evils and Follies which are apt to insinuate into the most Solitary Life.

I MUST in the next Place, observe, that the Life of Man must neither be wholly Contemplative, nor wholly Active; for as Action and Business, without any Meditation, is apt to alienate the Mind from GOD, to corrupt all that is great and truly wise in it, and wed it wholly to the World; so I doubt a Life spent wholly in Contempla-

templation, without any Mixture of Action, will prove fruitless and unprofitable; and Men condemned to utter Solitude, like the Trees and Shrubs of the Wilderness, would grow wild and savage, luxuriant in Leaves, but their Fruit, if they brought forth any, sour and small. They forget the Nature and the Duty of Man, and talk not seraphically, but fantastically, whoever persuade him to give up himself entirely to Contemplation: Man is yet a mixt and compound Being, when he becomes all Spirit, let him be all Thought: He is yet a Citizen of this World, tho' he be destined for another; let him not forget that there are Virtues becoming him as such; let him live by Intuition, when he comes into the perfect Light, and enters into the beatifick Presence; in the mean Time, let Man content himself with human Virtue, in this low probationary State. I proceed to discourse of these three Things:

First, THE Reasons and Ends of a contemplative Life.

Secondly, THE necessary Qualifications for it.
And,

Thirdly, THE due Regulations of it.

First, OF the Reasons and Ends of a contemplative Life. Some propose to themselves Ease and Enjoyment, as the great End of their Retirement; now tho' this be a mean Project, little becoming the Excellence of our Christian Profession, yet I cannot but acknowledge, it seems to me an absurd Thing, to wear out Life in a conditional Hurry or Drudgery; and I cannot but think it reasonable, that Men should one Time or other allow Ease to the Body, and Quiet to the Mind;

should set both free from their Servitude to the World, and eat the Fruit of their Travail and Care: But tho' this be true, yet if Men quit the Business, only to give themselves up to the Pleasures of the World; if they exchange their Anxiety and Toil for Luxury and Sensuality, and instead of being industrious, and thriving Traders, become idle, or, which is worse, loose and riotous Country Gentlemen; this, I must confess, is a miserable Change; this is but to prophane Retirement, abuse Plenty, and waste that precious Time which God has made them Masters of. This, in a Word, is not for a Man to quit his Slavery but to exchange Masters; for as to the Interest of another Life, and the true End of this, it is much the same Thing, whether a Man be a Servant to Pleasure and Sloth, or to Covetousness and Ambition.

THE Sum is plainly this, it is undoubtedly lawful for such as have been long toiled in the Pursuit of the World, to retire and enjoy themselves and their Friends; but if by Enjoyment be understood, only the Gratification of the Humour by outward Pleasures, I must affirm, that this is too mean, too low, to be the chief End of a Retreat: And if, which is worse, by Enjoyment be meant growing fat with good Eating and Drinking, or as it were rank and rotten through Ease and Sloth, I deny this to be the Enjoyment of a Man, much less of a Christian: The Enjoyment of a private Life, ought to consist in Peace and Order, in Harmony and Exaltation, in a holy Calm and Serenity, in which, as in a clear Day, from the Top of some advantageous Height, we enjoy an enlarged and delightful Prospect. When we look backwards, we behold a wide Sea covered with a vast Number of all Sorts of Vessels, tossed up and down at the
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Mercy of Winds and Waves, some few seem to make out with a steady Course, but are immediately encounter'd with cross Winds and Storms, a very few indeed, return in Triumph Homewards, and of these, some miscarry almost in Sight of Port. Of all the rest, a great Part, with much Toil and Difficulty, scarcely live in Strefs of Seas and Weather; but the far greater Part suffer Wreck, and scatter their miserable Ruins on every Coast. When we look forward, we discover a rich and secure Country, filled with all the Marks of Joy and Victory. The Enjoyment then of the retired, is to consist in the pleasant Reflections they make on their Escape out of a tempestuous World, in the Inter-course they maintain with that above; in a calm and leisurely Survey of all the various and wondrous Works of God, the Works of Grace and Nature; and lastly, in a familiar Acquaintance with themselves, and the daily Practice of pleasing and perfect Virtues.

Secondly, ONE End of Retirement may be Self-defence, or Preservation. An active Life is a State of War, and the World is an hostile Country. Snares and Ambushes are laid every where for us, and ever and anon Temptations, worldly and fleshly Lusts, which *war against the Soul*, endeavour either to court and betray us, or to drive and force us to Death and Ruin. Therefore, if we be conscious to ourselves of our own Weakness, we have Reason not to expose ourselves to Dangers, which we have not Courage nor Strength enough to vanquish; and to chuse Retirement not as a State of Perfection, but Safety. The Measures of Grace, the Strength of Reason, and the Inclinations of Nature, are very different in different Men: Whoever therefore, upon the best survey he can make of his own Forces and after some, not insincere

Trials, finds himself no Match for the World, unable to countermine its Policies, and oppose its Power, such a one, if he can, may, nay, I believe ought to retire from the World, as from the Face of a too potent Enemy. For tho' an active Life be in itself more serviceable to Mankind, yet in this Case we may prefer a contemplative One as the securer; and this is not to prefer Ease before spiritual Industry, but before a rash Presumption, and a fatal Overthrow.

ANOTHER End of Retirement may be, to render us more beneficial to the World. The different Talents of different Persons seem to mark them out, to different Sorts of Life. There are, if I may so speak, active and contemplative Gifts, and it is a great Felicity for any one to be able to know himself so well, as to discern what the GOD of Nature has designed him for: Some, who are a Disgrace to a publick Station, would be an Ornament to a private One; many who act but awkwardly, think very wisely and accurately; and some, who do but expose themselves in Business, would pass very well in Retirement, and prove excellent Examples of Innocence and Virtue, and wonderfully oblige by their good Nature, Sweetness, and Charity, all such as should live within the Reach of their Influence. None are wont more earnestly to covet Retirement, than such as are naturally addicted to Learning. Men too plain, or too great for a crafty World, too generous, and tender, for a bustling, vexatious One; these are the Men, who when they are Masters of their Wishes, seem more particularly obliged to dedicate themselves to some eminent Service of the Publick. These must not bury their Talents, but ripen them in Quiet and Retirement. Like Guardian-Angels, they should procure the Honour and Happiness of the Places, which they

they seldom or never appear to; and withdrawing only, not to avoid the Service, but the Foolery of the World, they must ever maintain an active Charity for those they leave behind, caught and entangled in it. But tho' this Direction more immediately concern such as these, that is, Men of Parts, yet sure there are none utterly exempt from this Obligation of procuring the publick Good in there Proportion. Who is there so destitute of the Gifts of Grace, Nature or Fortune, as to have no Mite to cast into the publick Treasury? He that dares not attempt the enlightning or reforming the World, can yet advise and comfort his ignorant or afflicted Neighbour; he who cannot give Advice, may yet gives Alms, which very often is as solid and substantial a Benefit; and he that cannot do this, can yet never be excused from offering up daily Prayers for the Peace and Welfare of his Country, for the Preservation and Edification of the Church, for the Conversion of Sinners: Nay, he may proceed to what Particularities he shall see fit or necessary, both in his Petitions and Thanksgivings, and from these Intercessions both the Publick and Private, may, for ought I know, reap more true and valuable Benefit, than from the Works and Labours of the Learned, or from the Alms and Bounty of the Rich. To conclude, he that leads the most private Life, and is of the poorest Endowments, can yet never be supposed utterly incapable of rendering any the least Service to others; since the single Example of Virtue and Integrity, and the Warmth of a pious and edifying Conversation is of the greatest Use. Some Way or other therefore the most solitary Life ought to serve the Publick, that so Retirement may not minister to Wantonness and Sloth, but Piety and Virtue; and the World may not lose a Member,

but enjoy its Service in its proper Place, and most effectual Manner. But,

THE main End of Retirement from the World should be, to dedicate ourselves more entirely to God. It was to this End, that the Prophets, and the *Essens* amongst the *Jews*, and many devout and excellent Persons amongst the Christians, have chose Solitude and Desarts. I mean, not uninhabited Places, (for that if it were so, was an Excess and Extravagance) but calm and silent Retreats from the Noise and Impertinence, from the Hurry and Distraction of much Business and much Acquaintance; here a Man seems to have little else to do, but to praise God and improve himself, to correct and subdue whatever he feels amiss in himself, to perfect and augment his Graces, and to dress and adorn his Soul for the Festival Solemnities of another World: Now he seems to have nothing to do, but to begin his Hallelujahs, to advance into the Confines of Heaven by Faith and Devotion, and from the Heights of Meditation, to survey as from the next advantageous Hill, the Riches and the Pleasures of that *Canaan* which he shall shortly enter into: And by this Method, as he shall enlarge his Appetite and Capacity of Happiness, so shall he enlarge his Share in it: By this Method he shall adorn Religion, and represent it to the World as most lovely and most useful; he shall experience it to be unspeakably delightful in itself; he shall render the World more easy to him, and Heaven more desirable; and when he comes to the Banks of *Jordan*, which parts this World from the other, he shall find the Streams of it divided to make him Way; that is, the Troubles and Terrors of it dissipated, and he shall pass thro' it full of humble Gratitude for the Blessings of this
past

past Life, and ravishing Hopes of those of the future.

I GO on to the Qualification which fit Men for a retired Life; and these are, I think, Three.

FIRST, *A plentiful, or at least, competent Fortune.*

SECONDLY, *A mild and humble Disposition, or at least a quiet and composed Mind.*

THIRDLY, *A good Understanding.*

FIRST, *A plentiful Fortune.* It is true, that a Competency is sufficient to render a retired Life easy; and when any one betakes himself to it as a Refuge or Sanctuary, against the Hostilities of Temptation, this is abundantly enough: But were a contemplative Life is a Matter of Choice, a plentiful Fortune is of great Use, and a great Ornament; it will make the Example of a Man's Virtue shine with a clearer Lustre and greater Authority; it will enable him to do many Works of Charity, which shall have much Delight in them, without Toil or Disturbance; it will furnish him with all useful Means of publick and private Devotion, and with whatever is necessary to enable him to pass away the Time both delightfully and rationally. By a plentiful Fortune, I do not mean a great one; this is more commonly burdensome, than useful to a private Life, and more apt to incumber it, than promote the true Ends of it. In my Retirement, I would have Decency and Order, but not State and Show; I would have comely Plenty, but not a toilsome Affluence; for the Business of Solitude is to raise the Mind, not to entangle and enslave it. But the Measures of this Wealth must finally

finally be determined by every Man's own Bosom; for it ought to be proportioned to the Temper and Genius, to the Capacities and Abilities of the Person who retires, and to the more immediate Design and Ends of his Retirement: And after all, there is no greater Stress to be laid upon this Qualification than this, it is convenient, but not essential; though a wise Man may make an excellent Use of it, it is not so absolutely necessary, but that he may be happy without it, both in Publick and Private. For,

SECONDLY, *The Pleasure and Success of Retirement depends much more on a Man's Temper;* that it be calm and quiet, that it be meek and humble. And if it be not naturally so, it must be made so; for a proud and ambitious, a restless and turbulent Person, will in vain seek for that Rest in sequestering himself from the World, which is to be found only in the subduing his Passions: He that is fond of Esteem, he that is at the Disposal of Fancy and Humour, and is not able to shake off the Yoke of Fashions and Customs, will find much to torment him, but nothing to improve or delight him in his Retirement: But on the other Hand, the meek and humble Man will find his Garden a Paradise, and his Solitude a conversing with God; he will enjoy the present without any further Prospect or Ambition; meditate without any Distraction; worship and praise God, as if he had no other Business; and do all the Good he can in his little Sphere, as if it were the only Pleasure of the Life he had chose. It is one of the great Privileges of Retirement, to be able to neglect imaginary Good, and pursue that only which is substantial; to be the Masters of our Time and Actions, and to model Life by our own Reason, not the Fancies and Humours of others. It is the great Advantage

vantage of Retirement, that a Man has all the Pleasure his Soul desires within his own Reach, that all of the World that is grateful to him, is to be found within the Verge of his private Abode: He therefore whose Mind gads abroad, and hankers after foreign Pleasures, who is tainted with Envy or Emulation; who hunts after Esteem, and is discomposed by the Fancy and Censures of others, muddies the pure Stream, corrupts the true Relish of a retired Life: This therefore ought to be the first Endeavour of him who seeks Happiness in a Retreat; to free his Mind from all those busy or ambitious Passions, which will disturb his Repose, and corrupt his Taste, and to reduce it to its native Purity and Simplicity, in which it will be able to relish the Blessing of true Liberty, of easy and innocent Pleasures, of true and artless Friendship, of regular and undisturbed Devotion, and finally, of calm and elevated Meditation.

THIRDLY, *A good Understanding is a necessary Qualification for Retirement.* It requires no little Prudence to guard ourselves against those Evils or Impertinences which will be apt to insinuate themselves into our Solitude; decently to decline Business, Acquaintance, Ceremonies, which will rob us of our Time and Liberty, and obstruct us in all the wise Ends we propose to ourselves, is a Matter of no ordinary Dexterity and Address. Nor does it require less Understanding to preserve the Peace and Order of a private Family; and yet it is in vain to shun the Infection that is Abroad, if more fatal and stubborn Maladies reign at Home.

FURTHER, the Family of the contemplative Man, ought not only to give him no Disturbances, but if possible, it ought to be moulded and composed to his own Humour, and animated by Inclinations

clinations alike to his. Nay, after all, let us suppose the Man so entirely sequestred, as to be utterly disengaged from all other Interests but his own, to have no Dependence upon any other's Motion, to have none but himself to regard, no other to improve; even here I cannot tell whether so absolute a Liberty do not need the greater Wisdom to moderate and govern it, and whether it do not require a larger Capacity to find a proper and wise Employment, for one whose Fortune has tied him to none at all: They are no ordinary Endowments which will enable one loose from all Business, to spend his Time profitably and pleasantly; and yet if he do not, he will be liable to the worst of Evils; he will dissolve and putrify in Sloth, or else turn sour and savage, churlish and brutish, through Ignorance, Disgust, and Discontent; nauseated with a Life that affords him nothing new, nothing taking.

“BUT the Book of Nature lies open to him!” It is true, but he cannot read it; it is not every vulgar Eye that discerns the delicate Touches of a skilfull Pencil, the curious and subtle Mixtures of Light and Shade in a well drawn Piece; it is not every Spectator can judge of the Beauty, Strength, and Convenience of a well contrived Building.

“BUT his Cabinet may be well furnished!” It is true, but if he has no Genius for Eloquence, no Ear for the Musick of Wit and Fancy, no Judgment for History, no Comprehension for Arts or Sciences, what is a Cabinet to him, though furnished ever so well, either for Use or Rarity? It is only fit to be shewn, or to sleep in; for after all the Cost and Skill laid out upon it, the Couch is the best Furniture in it.

“BUT

"BUT there is Friendship!" There is; the Name indeed there is, but the Thing is too divine; a low and grovelling Soul, a dull and impenetrable Temper cannot discern the Charms, nor taste the Sweetness of Friendship: What is that Familiarity which is incapable of Tenderness or Passion? What is that Conversation which is incapable of Variety, or Depth of Wit, or Judgment?

"BUT there is Religion, there is Devotion, a boundless Field of Profit and Delight!" It is true; and the Principles of this are plain and strong, able to move the Man of lowest Capacity to decline Evil, follow his Calling, and do Good in Proportion to his Sense and Ability. But as to seraphick contemplative Religion, for this to be the Life and Business of Man, it requires a vast Capacity, raised and refined Notion, and little less than real Enthusiasm; I mean a truly Divine Impetus or Ardour impressed or enkindled in the Soul, by the exuberant Influxes of the blessed Spirit. In a Word, he who in his Retreat is entirely Master of himself and Time, had Need of Talents to employ him, to find him Business and Pleasure, and to enable him to reap Benefit from the one, and to preserve his Innocence in the other. And without this Degree of Understanding, a solitary Life must be very dull and barren; nor can I think of any Cure for this, but to increase a Man's Task and Business, in Proportion to the Defect of his Understanding, that so Employment may fill those Vacuities which Contemplation never can. This puts me in Mind to advance on to the third Thing proposed, *viz.*

THE Regulations of a contemplative Life, which regards, the Time; the Place; or, the Exercise and Employment of Retirement.

First,

First, As to Time. Though Contemplation, more or less, ought to enter into every Part of our Lives, yet the most seasonable Time of giving ourselves up to it, is the Evening of Life, the Declension of our Age: We have then had our Fill of the World, and shall not be likely to hanker after it: We have seen the Emptiness of it, and shall be more likely to fix upon solid Good: We shall value our Peace and Calm the more, after we have been long tossed by Storms. Besides, we shall set ourselves more seriously to the Meditation of Death and Judgment, when we are come within View of them; and shall be apt to examine the intrinsic Good and Evil of Things with more Impartiality, when the Heats of Youth, and the Boilings of our Passions are cooled: And finally, this is a seasonable Time to correct and repair the Errors of the past Life, and to state our Accounts for the last Audit.

BUT though I thus prefer Age, as most fit for a retired Life, I do not dissuade the Younger from it, provided it be Virtue, not Softness; the Love of another World, not a cowardly declining the Duties of this, which prompts them to it: Otherwise, it were sure much better that the younger Sort, should be taken up by Business; nay, should contend even with the Cares, Troubles, and Difficulties of the World, rather than make Choice of Retirement to be the Scene of a voluptuous, lazy, and unprofitable Life: For in the one Case something is every Day learned, something done; in the other nothing: In the one, the Man lives neither dishonourable to himself, nor unuseful to his Country; but in the other, he rots and consumes away ingloriously and unprofitably.

Secondly,

Secondly, As to Place. Solitude has ever been deemed a Friend to Meditation, and Retirement from the World very serviceable to a Conversation with Heaven: And this Opinion is much strengthened by the Practice of the Prophets, and devout Persons in the best Times. Without Question, a private Retreat affords many Conveniences and Advantages to a Contemplative Life: Leisure and Silence settle and compose the Thoughts, and the Mind augments its Strength and Vigour by Rest, and Collection within itself: And in this State of Serenity it is most fit to reflect upon itself, or enter into a Survey of the Rest and Peace of glorified Spirits, and examine the Grounds of its own Hopes. By Retirement we may disengage ourselves from those Things which are apt either to soften or disturb us, and to breed in us either Vanity or Vexation. And I cannot tell, but the Fineness of the Air, the Openness of Prospect, and Regularity and Moderation of Diet, Rest, and Exercise, may have that Influence upon our Bodies as to prepare them to be the fitter Instruments of the Mind. To all this we may add, that the Variety, Beauty, and Use of all the Works of Nature, insensibly raise in us an Admiration of the Divine Wisdom, and invite us to adore his Power and Goodness. But all this notwithstanding, it must ever be remembred, that Retirement does not so much consist in Solitude of Place, as in Freedom from secular Business and Troubles, from the Allurements, Distractions, and Vexations of the World: If we put these off, we may find Retirement enough in the most populous City. But if we carry these with us into the Country, we shall reap little Benefit from Change of Place or Air; and under the Retirement, we shall be persecuted with all the Evils with which Vanity, Disorder, and Distraction are wont to disquiet an active and busy Life: This being rightly understood

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stood, the Nature of our Circumstances ought to govern us in chusing the Place of our Retreat, but especially a Regard to those Duties wherein we propose to spend the bigger Portion of our Time.

Thirdly, THE Exercise and Employment of a contemplative Life is now to be considered: And here these several Things offer themselves immediately, Business, Friendship, and Meditation, as comprising all the several Acts of a contemplative Life.

First, BUSINESS. I have before said, that a Life of mere Contemplation is above the Nature and State of Man. And when I consider how few are capable of any long or regular Contemplations, I am apt to think that the wisest Way for most is, not to free themselves from all temporal Engagements, but only from such as will disturb the Peace and Order of a retired Life. And yet I could wish that their Growth and Improvement in Knowledge and Goodness, might be their main Business and Employment. So many indeed are our Errors and Sins, so frail, tender, and weak our Virtue, that to correct the one, and confirm the other, is Business enough, and may of itself take up the Whole of Life. If we pursue diligently all the Methods of the Improvement of Life, we shall need no other Employments to spend our Time. He that, besides a constant Attendance upon publick Devotion, bestows some Time each Day on bewailing his Sins, and blessing GOD for his Mercies; on examining his present State, and establishing his future Hopes: He that spends each Day but a few Thoughts on GOD and *Jesus Christ* his Redeemer, on the Vanity and Uncertainty of all Things in this World, but Religion; or finally

on Death and Judgment, and withall on the various Arts by which Sin is wont to cheat and surprize him, will, I believe, find but few Hours to waste; especially when it is considered how much Time the Necessities of Nature, and the indispensable Duties we owe to Relatives, take up.

AND this calls to my Mind the Vigilance and Industry we owe to the Happiness of others, as well as to our own: There are a great many Offices of Charity, to which Humanity and our Christian Profession oblige us. The Peace of the Neighbourhood, the Preservation of the Laws, the promoting publick Piety, the Instruction of the Ignorant, the Relief the Needy, the Comfort of the Afflicted, the Protection of the Injured; these, and such like Occasions, will never be wanting to rouse our Zeal, and employ our Charity: And these are Works which will turn to as good, if not a better Account in the Life to come, than solitary Virtue. And certainly they turn to excellent Account in this; for when the retired Man doth cultivate the Neighbourhood, and sow it with his Charity, he seems but to plant and water his own Garden, or plough and sow his own Fields: And while he renders them more rich, gay and fertile, himself reaps the Pleasure and the Profit, enjoys the Prospect, and feasts on the Fruit. Just so it is in this Piece of Spiritual Husbandry; he who imparts Wisdom and Instruction to another, purifies and exalts his own Mind; he that scatters the Expressions of his Bounty and Charity, feels his Soul warm and delighted, and finds his Virtue enlarged. For it is with Grace as it is with Nature, the Exercise of each breeds both Strength and Pleasure. To all which you may add, that no Man consults more

effectually the Interest and Pleasure of his Retirement, than he who most zealously studies the Support and Improvement of his Neighbourhood.

It is here very needful to put those I am discoursing to in Mind to take Care, that whilst they shun the Trouble and Business of the World, they suffer not themselves to be entangled in Impertinencies of their own creating; that they mind and pursue the main End, that is, Increase in Virtue, and be at all Times ready to sacrifice Matters of less Moment to this their great Interest; lest Fancy and Humour, or something worse, usurp the Place of Reason, as it does too often happen, in a Life of absolute and uncontrollable Liberty.

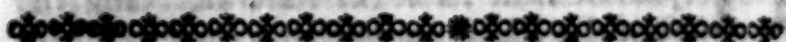
Secondly, As to FRIENDSHIP: The Distinction between Acquaintance and Friends is ever good, but never more proper or necessary than here: For Retirement, as it signifies sequestering ourselves from Company, is to be understood with Discretion. And the plain Rule here, as in all other Cases, is to avoid Extremes; as a Croud, so Solitariness seems not to minister, either to the Improvement of the Mind, or to the Peace and Calm of Life: The one robs us of our Time, the other leaves us so much, that to many it becomes burdensome: The one makes us vain, trifling, or it may be worse, sensual; the other dull and slow, or it may be morose and savage. The Skill of a contemplative Man is not to decline all Company, but provide himself of good. The Prophets themselves had their Colleges; and they in the first Times, who left the Cities, did yet associate themselves with one another. Indeed, as I take it, in this Kind of Life we have the fullest Enjoyment, and the best Service of our Friends; the purest
Delight

Delight, and the truest Edification, being best promoted in the contemplative Life by Friendship. And therefore Friendship is no more to be banished from the Gardens and Retirements of the Contemplative, than from the Tables and Enjoyments of the Active.

Lastly, DEVOTION. Prayer and Meditation, are the remaining Parts of the Ascetick Life, and indeed these ought to be his great Employment. A Life in the World may be a Life of Business, but a retired one ought to be a Life of Prayer and Meditation. Nor indeed can it be well otherwise, unless we have proposed to ourselves some false Ends of Retirement; for these are not only the Duties, but the Pleasures of the private Life: In these the Soul is enlightned, enlarged, raised, ravished; in these it soars up to Heaven, and looks down upon Earth; in these it possesses Stability and Security, Peace and Rest, in the Midst of a frail unstable Nature, and a restless and tumultuous World: in these all the Passions of the Soul are exercised with a most tender Delight, Sorrow, Fear, or Reverence; Love, Hope, Joy reign here without either Check or Satiety.

O BLESSED Life! wherein, sequestred from the World, I enjoy all that it has in it of pure, of true, or natural. Ah! that I could once break loose from those Obligations that hang upon me, and enter into thy Peace and Tranquility! I would plunge myself into all thy rational Delights; I would lose myself to this contemptible World, and forgetting those Shadows and Appearances, and at best but faint and weak Reflections of Good, which flutter here about me; I would abandon myself intirely to the Joys of the Spirit,

and the Elevations of Contemplation. Let others enjoy Honour, Wealth, and Power; let me enjoy myself, Truth, and GOD: Let others enjoy the Flatteries of Sense, and the Cheats of Fancy; give me the Health of a sprightly Mind, the Calm and Serenity of a silent Retreat, with the Pleasure and Security which the Divine Presence breeds in it; let others finally depend on Fortune, me only on GOD and myself.





S E C T. III.

*Of the right husbanding or prolonging
Life.*

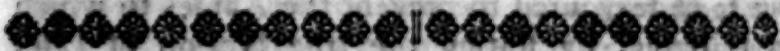
HAVING in the two former Sections, first, proved Life to be in its own Nature a solid Good, a considerable Blessing; and next, endeavoured to prevent the Abuses to which it is liable, by stating the true Notion of Life, and by prescribing Rules for the right Conduct of the Active, Trading, and Contemplative Life: The next Thing that naturally falls under Consideration is, the Shortness and Uncertainty of this Blessing: This is that *that* puzzles the Wit, and baffles the Courage of Man, the Rock against which all the Attempts of human Philosophy have dashed and split themselves. For, to say Truth, whatever Complaints Men make against the Troubles, yet have they ever made more against the Shortness and Uncertainty of Life.

It is true, no Cure has ever yet been found of our Mortality: Yet as wise Men have ever thought it reasonable to make the most of an Enjoyment, tho' it would not come up to all that they could wish; so, were there no other Life, it would behove us to do with this, to keep in the Flame as long as we can, tho' we know it must go out at last.

Now

Now Life, like Enjoyment, is capable of Increase two Ways, that is, either in its Continuance, or Perfection; either by lengthning its Duration, or by raising, improving, or, as it were, ripening the Joys and Fruits of Life. I will first speak of prolonging Life. And here I will, *First*, Demonstrate that Life may be prolonged. *Secondly*, I will treat of the Ways of prolonging it.

BUT before I do either, it may be no very wide Digression to take Notice of the little Artifices by which many endeavour to evade the Strokes of Time, and flatter themselves with a Sort of imaginary Immortality.



CHAP. I.

The usual Arts of preventing or retarding the Decays of Nature, and lessening the Fears of Death exploded, and better substituted in their Room.

SOME take Sanctuary in Physick, for which they expect at least the Preservation of the Vigour of Nature, if not the Lengthning the Date of Life: I will not dispute whether this Art has deserved so well of Mankind, as to justify the Gentiles in enrolling the first Authors of it among the Gods: Or, what is more to the Purpose, who have lived longest, they who have made most, or they who have made least Use of Physick. However these Questions be resolved, I am sure our Time is better spent in labouring to contemn, than

to prevent Death ; and that those excellent Principles which fortify the Mind, contribute more to the Comfort and Pleasure of Life, than the most Sovereign Cordials that fortify the Spirits.

SOME, willing to conceal those Decays which they could not prevent, have devised many Ways to counterfeit and supply that Youth and Beauty which Time and various Accidents have washed and worn away. But alas ! to what Purpose is it to deck and varnish withered Nature, and paint the Spring upon the Face of Winter ? To what Purpose is it, when the Evil is incurable, to suffer ones self to be flattered and imposed upon, and try in vain to hide a broken Fortune, not only from the World, but from ones self ? Alas ! we must feel what we will not see. Nature droops and decays as fast within as it doth without ; and we lose the Life and Briskness of our Blood, as fast as we do the Elegancy of Feature, or the Floridness of Complexion. In a Word, as to this perishing Body, Physick, Washes, Fucuses are in vain : You but paint and patch a ruinous Fabrick, which can never be made strong and beautiful 'till Death hath taken it down to the Ground, and Resurrection built it up a-new.

If therefore you would take my Advice, you should lay in a Stock of sprightly generous Pleasures, which may be ever ready to entertain you when Youth and Strength are past : You should take Pains to enrich and adorn the Mind, whose Beauties will more than supply the Loss of those of the Body : Wisdom, Magnanimity, Bounty, Modesty, Sweetness, and Humility, are Charms able to recommend a deformed or a decrepid Body, and I am confident may be purchased at a much cheaper Rate than false or counterfeit

feit Beauties are by those who are solicitous about them. Let then the Morning and Noon of your Life be spent in acquiring Virtue, Honour, Knowledge, and good Humour, and in your Evening you will have no Reason to complain of the Loss of Youth and Beauty: These will be solid Riches, and most amiable Charms, that will provide you Delight and Support at Home, and command both Love and Reverence Abroad; and Time will do you no other Injury than it does a Tree, when it changes its Blossoms into Fruit; or than it does Statues, Medals, and Pictures, whose Value is enhanced by their Antiquity.

CONVINCED that the Decays of Nature cannot be long concealed or propt up, some please themselves with an Opinion of surviving in their Posterity; as if Man by Generation did but multiply himself, and Life did not, like a Flame, end with its Fuel, but were transmitted from Father to Son, and so on; like a Stream that is still the same, tho' it passeth through numerous Pipes.

WELL, for my Part, I cannot fool myself with a vain Gingle of Words: I cannot flatter myself that I shall live in him, who probably will in a little Time forget me, however he owe his Being and Fortune to me; nay, it may be, will wish that others did forget me too; like a Stream running, as soon as it enlarges itself, as far as it can from its little Fountain, and labouring as it were by its Circlings and Wandrings to conceal the Meanness of its Rise. I cannot flatter myself, that I can live in them whose Hopes and Fears, Desires and Joys, will differ it may be no less from mine, whatever they now be, than the Dead do from the Living. Fools that we are, to talk so wildly, as if when dead, we lived in our Children. Do we when living,

ing, share in their distant Joys? Or do our Pulses beat by their Passions? I would not be mistaken, as if I designed to oppose or extinguish Nature: I know the great Author of it, for wise and excellent Purposes, has implanted in us kind Inclinations towards Posterity; but then these are for the Sake of others, not myself; they ripen into Actions that serve the Turn of others, not my own; I only bear the Fruit which others must gather. And whatever Pleasure I may now feel in a promising Prospect of the Honour and Virtue of my Posterity, it is such a one as that of *Moses* beholding *Canaan* at a Distance, but such a Distance that he must never enter into it.

To conclude, whatever Men promise themselves, I think them tolerably fortunate, if instead of reaping any Benefit, when dead, from their Children, their Lives be not stained and disturbed by them; extremely fortunate, if they can make them fit to be their Friends and Favourites, worthy to share their Pleasures, and able to give them some Ease in their Troubles: Though after all, I cannot but think it is infinitely more eligible to be the Father of many good Works, than many Children; and to spend my Time nobly in cultivating my Mind, than in entangling my Life with Cares for those who often will take none for themselves.

SOME have entertained vain Projects of an imaginary Immortality; an Immortality which they must owe neither to GOD nor Nature, but to Historians and Poets, Painters and Statuaries, and to the dying Ecchos of a surviving Memory: I mean, that which Men seek in posthumous Fame, in Pictures, and Statues, and Tombs, and embalming Carcasses. All these seem to carry in them some fading Shadows of Existence: But ah! how imaginary

nary a Life is this! Something that does infinitely less resemble Life, than a Dream does Enjoyment. Ah vain Support of human Frailty! Ah vain Relief of Death! If there be any Thing in Honour, if it be Body or Substance enough to be seen, or felt, or tasted; if it be Reality enough to be any Way enjoyed, let me possess it while I live: It comes too late, if it serve only to increase the Pomp of my Funeral, or to dress and set off my Sepulchre, or to silence the Groans, or to wipe off the Tears of my Orphans or my Friends, though this be something. I cannot feel any Pleasure in the Foresight of that Glory, which, while I strain to gaze upon at a Distance, the Fogs and Mists of Death thicken the Sky: The Voice that will speak me great, will speak me gone: The Statues and Marbles which adorn my Memory, will adorn my Grave too; and while they express my Image or my Actions, will proclaim, that all that is now left of me, is Rottenness and Ashes.

ALL this I talk, abstracting from the Considerations of a future Life: For how far the Reputation I leave behind, may concern my Soul in its State of Separation from the Body, whether the Ecchos of those Praises bestowed upon my Memory here, will reach and please mine Ears in another World, I know not, nor do I much desire to know; for supposing such a Life, my Soul must needs have nobler Employment, and nobler Pleasure than this can ever give it. I must confess, if the Reflections of my Light, when I am set and gone, would be of any Use to direct and enflame Posterity, I should now take some Pleasure in that, which it is hard to persuade me I shall take any in hereafter: Nor would it be a trifling Satisfaction to me, while I lived, if I could believe that my Relations, or my Friends, could receive any Honour or Patronage from

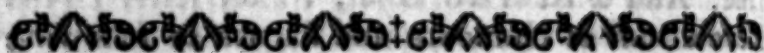
from me when dead : And since some Sort of Character I must leave behind ; since I must in this Manner, among some at least, and for some little Time survive, I had rather leave behind me Perfume than Stench ; I had rather live in Commendations, than in Satyrs and Invectives. But after all, how lean and miserable a Comfort is this ? that when I am dead, it will be said, I once lived ; and a promiscuous Crowd will talk of me, and of my Actions, what they please ; some Things good, some Things bad, some Things true, some Things false : And what is worse yet, I must suffer all the Revolutions of Humours and Parties in following Ages : These must give my Abilities and Performances their Character, and the prevailing Faction must stamp what Estimate they please upon my Memory.

AND yet true it is, I love a Charity that is universal and boundless, and extends itself to following Ages. And certainly there is not a nobler Charity, than to furnish the World with an Example that may adorn its own Times, and enkindle the Emulation of Posterity. Nay farther, I am willing to believe, that a gracious God will sum up, amongst the Accompts of my Life, the Influence it has upon the World when I am dead ; and will consider it, not simply in itself, but with all the happy Effects which it may any Way be the Occasion of in successive Ages. Let me then do Good, and if I can, great Actions, upon any Motive, provided it be just and allowable, since this will be the blessed Fruit of it. But yet it shall be my Business to make sure of my own Immortality ; if that of my Name will follow, let it : It shall be my Business to gain the Approbation of God and Angels ; and if the Praises of this lower World join their Harmony and Consent with that Above, this cannot disoblige me :

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I will with all my Power make sure of my Salvation,
let my Fame be as it may.

HAVING exploded those mistaken Fancies, by which Men support themselves against the Shortness of Life; I will now proceed to treat of the only two Ways by which this Evil may be in some Measure remedied; that is, by prolonging the Date, and by improving the Nature of Life, so that a Man may live much in a little Time.



CHAP. II.

Of lengthning Life.

UNDER this Article I design, *First*, To refute the Opinion of a fatal Period of human Life.

Secondly, To consider what Ways the Date of Life may be lengthned.

Thirdly, To remove those Objections with which this Advice is encountered.

To begin with the *First*: It has been too generally taught and believed, That the Date of human Life cannot be protracted; that every particular Man has a fixed and immutable Period decreed him, beyond which he cannot go. But this Opinion directly defeats the Force of all Motives and Arguments to Virtue, derived from temporal Considerations, and undermines our Dependence upon
God,

GOD, and ridicules our Addresses to Him, as far as they concern this Life, and the Things of it. And how plain a Step is this to the Overthrow of *Judaism*, which was built upon temporal Promises; and consequently to the Overthrow of *Christianity* itself, the Authority of the New Testament depending in so great a Measure upon that of the Old? And were there no other Reasons to reject this Opinion, these, I should think, were abundantly sufficient; since it is impossible that any Thing should be consonant to Truth, which is so repugnant to the Authority of Religion: But there are so many more, that I must be forced to crowd them together, that I may avoid Tediousness and Redundancy. This Persuasion then is repugnant to all the Instincts of our Nature. To what Purpose is the Love of Life implanted in us by our great Creator? Why is Self-preservation the first Dictate and Law of Nature, if all our Care and Diligence can contribute nothing towards it? Vain and impertinent is that Law, whose Observation can procure us no Good, nor its Violation any Evil. This is a Persuasion that flatly contradicts the Experience and Observation of Mankind in general. How can the Period of Life be fixed and unalterable, which we see every Day either lengthened out by Care and Moderation, or shortened by Excess and Negligence? unless we can resolve, to the utter Overthrow of Religion, not only that Life and Death, but also that Vice and Virtue, Wisdom and Folly, which lead to the one and the other, are alike pre-determined. Nor is this Opinion less contrary to the Sense and Reason of the Wise and Prudent, than to the Experience of the Multitude. Self-preservation is the first and chief End of civil Societies, and human Law: But how ridiculous a Thing were it for the sagacious Part of Mankind to enter into deep Consultation, to frame solemn Laws, and devise the

strongest Obligations to fence and secure that Life which can neither be invaded one Minute before its fatal Hour, nor prolonged one Minute beyond it. Nor has Man only, but God Himself, endeavoured to secure this temporal Life by the strictest and most solemn Laws: Nor this only, but He has made Life and Death the Reward of Obedience and Punishment of Sin.

THIS Opinion therefore is a manifest Calumny against the Wisdom and Sincerity of God; against his Wisdom, if He raise up the Bulwarks of Laws to guard that Life, which can neither be violated before, nor extended beyond its Minute: His Sincerity, for his Promises would be ludicrous and insignificant, and so would his Threats too, if neither the Obedience of the Virtuous could lengthen, nor the Disobedience of the Sinner could shorten Life. In a Word, to what Purpose does the Spirit in *1 Pet. iii. 10, 11.* encourage Men to Religion by the Proposal of Life and Prosperity, if in Truth, Life and Prosperity depend, not on our Behaviour, but our Fate; and be not dispensed according to the open Proposals, but the secret and unconditional, the rigid and inflexible Decrees of the Almighty?

THE Truth of this Proposition being thus made out by unanswerable Reasons, we are not to suffer ourselves to be moved by any superstitious Imaginations, by any obscure or subtle Objections, or by any mere Colours or Appearances of Reason: For what is once clear and evident, ought to remain firm and unshaken, tho' we cannot unravel every Objection against it. Therefore tho' I should not be able to reconcile this Doctrine with some obscure Texts of Scripture; yet ought its Authority to be preserved, as built upon plain Texts and solid Reasons.

BUT

BUT the Truth is, there is nothing objected here; but what is capable of a very easy Answer. The Scriptures, which speak an appointed Time for Man upon Earth, are not to be understood of any particular personal Fate, but of a general Law or Rule of Nature; not of the Extent of every particular Person's Life, but of the Duration of Man in general, or of the Mortality of our Frame and Constitution, and the Shortness of Man's Residence here upon Earth; and imply no more than that Man, as well as all other Species of Animals, and indeed of Vegetables, (for so far *Job* extends the Comparison) hath his Time appointed, the Bounds of his Life or Abode here set him, beyond which he cannot pass. *Psalms xc. 10. The Days of our Age are threescore Years and ten; and though Men be so strong that they come to fourscore Years, yet is their Strength then but Labour and Sorrow, so soon passeth it away, and we are gone.*

As to the Prescience of GOD, I see not how the Denial of a fatal Period of human Life clashes with this. On the quite contrary, he seems to me injuriously to restrain the Knowledge of GOD, who thinks He foreknows nothing, but because he peremptorily pre-determined it. This, if we will speak Sense, is to magnify his Power, but to reduce and confine his Knowledge, or at least to depress and debase it: For thus it would not be a primary and essential Perfection, but would result from, or depend upon an arbitrary Will, an unguided Power. For my Part, I cannot think it necessary, if I could not reconcile GOD's Fore-knowledge with Contingency in Events, therefore with the *Socinian* to deny the one, or with the *Fatalist* the other: It is enough to me, that I learn from Scripture, that is, from GOD who cannot err, that Prescience belongs to the Creator, and Contingency to the Creature:

The Measures and Bounds of these, if there be any, let who will seek, it is not my Business now.

HAVING thus evidenced that the Period of Life is not fatally fixed, that no peremptory and unconditional Decree, supercedes our Vigilance and Industry for the Preservation of this Blessing: I will now proceed to the second Thing proposed, and consider which Way the Date of Life may be lengthened.

IT is obvious to every one, that Life depends upon these three Things: The Chearfulness of the Mind; the Health of the Body; and a favourable Providence of GOD; by which, as none will deny who admit of Providence, we may at least be protected from Violence and Accidents, such as human Prudence cannot foresee. And to these three, may, for ought I know, be added, the good Will of Man, whose Ministry and Service is very often of excellent Use to us in this Point.

THE first Thing then I am now to enquire into, is briefly, what Chearfulness of Mind contributes to the Preservation of Life, and then more fully, how we may possess ourselves of it.

IT is true, the morose and sour, the froward, the passionate, and the sullen, those Stains and Blots of human Nature often prolong their Lives to a great Age; but it is as true that the Loose and Debauch'd, the Intemperate and Incontinent do sometimes, tho' rarely, live long, and descend into the Grave, rather oppressed by their Years than their Excesses. And if from such extraordinary Instances as these, we shall take the Liberty to form Rules of Life, and to contradict known and received Truths, we shall ever live at the Mercy of
Fancy,

Fancy, and never find any firm Footing to rest upon. I will not therefore doubt, notwithstanding these rare Instances, but that the Chearfulness of the Mind has a very propitious, its Discontent, a very malign Influence, upon the Life of Man. The Content of the Mind preserves the Balsom of the Blood, and the Pleasure of it enlarges the Heart, raises the Spirits, actuates and invigorates all our Powers; so that when the Mind shines serene and bright, it seems to impart a new Warmth, and new Life to the Body; a new Spring, and new Verdure to this Earth: On the Contrary, a diseased Mind does, as it were, scatter its Contagion through the Body; Discontent and Melancholy sour the Blood, and clog the Spirits; Envy pines away; and Passion frets and wears out our Strength and Life. In few Words, there is an intimate Conjunction between the Mind and Body, and so close is the Dependence of the latter upon the former, that the Face of inferior Nature does evidently vary, wither, or flourish, according to that Variety of Weather it makes in the Sky above it, as the Mind smiles or lowrs upon it. And accordingly, if we appeal to Experience and Observation, I believe we may safely pronounce, that generally such live longest, as either think very little, or whose Thoughts are always calm and chearful; such as are stupid, and have no Passions; or are wise and good and have none but such as are regular and delightful. All this, I think, is not contested; and all the Difficulty lies in possessing ourselves of this Satisfaction and Content of Mind. Men seek it in every Thing, and even those Things which are diametrically opposite to one another, pretend to be infallible Guides to it: Atheism and Religion, Philosophy and Ignorance, worldly Prudence, and an affected Contempt of it, do all promise to teach us the Art of Satisfaction, but it will not be a very difficult

difficult Task, when we have examined the Preferences of each, to resolve which we are to follow.

IGNORANCE, Lust, and Fancy, are too blind, rash, and violent for us to abandon ourselves to their Conduct, nor are they more giddy and inconstant in themselves, than weak and subject to all the Changes and Accidents of the World, so that should they lead us on to Pleasure, we have Reason to apprehend Pain the next Moment; and at best, they leave us not in a Condition, either rationally to approve our Enjoyments, or to fortify ourselves against the Loss of them.

WORLDLY Policy is built wholly upon Mistakes. It proposes to us Things under the Notion of great and good, which when we have examined, we find not worth our seeking: And of these it can give us no Assurance, whether we respect their Acquisition or Possession: And the Ways it prescribes to put us in Possession of all that Satisfaction which results from these Things, have something in them so mean, so laborious, so uncertain, so vexatious, that no Success can compensate that Trouble and Shame which the canvassing for them puts us to.

ATHEISM pretends indeed to extinguish our Guilt and Fears, but it does also deface all the Beauty and Loveliness of human Actions. It pretends to let loose the Reins to Pleasure, but withal, it leaves us no Support under Evil. It takes off many Restraints, but withal, it unchains and lets loose our Passions. In a Word, it leaves us nothing truly great or lovely to enjoy in this World, or hope for in another. And if its Tenets were useful to us, yet have they no Certainty, no Foundation. It de-

rives all its Credit from the Confidence, not Reason of Men, who under Colour of a free and impartial Philosophy, advance the Interest of those Lusts to which they are intirely enslaved.

RELIGION then only remains to be followed. This rectifies our Opinions, and dispels our Errors, and routs those Armies of imaginary Evils which terrify and torment the World, much more than Spirits and Ghosts do. This discovers to us Objects worthy of all the Love and Admiration of our Souls. This extinguishes our Fear; shews us the Happiness of our present Condition, and opens us a glorious Prospect of our future one. This discovers to us the happy Tendency of temporal Evils, and the glorious Reward of them: And in one Word, teaches us both to enjoy and suffer. It moderates our Desires of Things uncertain, and fixes them upon those Things for which we can be responsible: It raises the Mind, clears the Reason, and finially forms us into such an united, settled, and compacted State of Strength, that neither the Judgement is easily shaken, nor the Affections hurried by any violent Transport. But do I not here imitate Physicians, who attend only to the most dangerous Symptoms, and neglect others? Whether I do or no, they who read such general Directions, are wont to do so in their Applications of them: And most are apt to look upon Religion as designed only to redress substantial and formidable Evils. And yet it is with the Mind as with the Body, tho' Fevers, Imposthumes, De-fluxions, kill, the Anger of a Pustule, the Pain of a Tooth, strangely disorder and disturb: And thus tho' Pain, and Death, and such like Evils, overthrow and overwhelm the Mind, yet are there a Croud of slight Evils which disquiet and discompose it. And this is a Matter not to be contemn'd, especially

especially by me, in the Prosecution of the Design I am here upon since; I persuade myself that the great and formidable Evils, Guilt, Pain, Poverty, Sickness, Death, or the Thoughts and Apprehensions of them, but rarely afflict the Life of Man. But there are other Evils of a slighter Nature, which, like Pirates, are perpetually cruising on our Coasts, and tho' they cannot invade and destroy, do much disturb and annoy us. Nay, what is yet more, it is very usual to see Men acquit themselves very honourably under true and substantial Evils, who come off very poorly from the Encounter of slight and despicable ones. How common is it, for one who maintains bravely his Courage and Judgment amidst Swords and Bullets, to lose all Patience, Prudence and Government, when attacked by a rude Jest? To see a Man that hears very calmly the Loss of a Ship, or a considerable Sum of Money, transported into strange Indecency upon the Breaking of a Glass, or the Spoiling of a Dish of Meat; and he who sits very tamely and unconcernedly down under a high Disgrace, sweats and faves if robbed but of a Cabbage or an Apricock.

THESE, and such like Remarks, one may make every Day, and almost in every Company: And what is the worst of all, our Fears and Sorrows, our Hate and Anger, are as violent and uneasy, when they spring from Causes of the least, as of the highest Moment. We bewail fantastick and true Misfortunes with the same Sighs and Tears, and resent imaginary and substantial Injuries with the same disordered Pulse and deformed Looks. When I have reflected on all this, I have often thought that it was as necessary to the Tranquillity of Life to guard myself against Dust and Flies, as against Storms and Tempests; to arm myself against the Stings of a Swarm of vexatious Accidents, as against Pestilence,

Pestilence, and War, and Poverty. And to this End, these following Rules have often been of great Use to me.

First, Of the Evils of Life I never take more to my Share than are really my own. I never travel Abroad to find out foreign Mischiefs to torment myself; as if there were not enough of the native Growth of my Country. My own Mind, my own Body, my own House, are Provinces, wide enough for me, and a little too Fruitful too. Nay, I am not ashamed to confess, I decline, if I can, an Evil, even lying in my Way, as I do a Bustle or a Fray, by passing on the other Side of the Street. I will never split upon a Shelf or Rock, if I have Sea-room enough. And as a little Distance of Place, so a little Distance of Time, serves my Turn to make me reckon such Evils as none of mine: I will no more distract or disturb myself with the Evils that are fancied teeming in the Womb of Time, than with those that are now in Being in *Peru* or *Mexico*. This is the very Lecture Religion reads me, for sure to incorporate distant Evils or to anticipate future ones, were far from *studying to be quiet, and doing ones own Business*; or from thinking with our Saviour, *Sufficient for the Day is the Evil thereof*, and were indeed to suffer as *busy Bodies, fearful, and Unbelievers*. If any Man will impute this to me as Brutality and Uncharitableness, I cannot help it; I thank God that I have Sense enough to Practise Caution without Fear, Care without Anxiety, and Charity without Distress or Agony of Mind.

Secondly, As to those Evils (I speak still of slight and daily ones) which I cannot avoid; my next Care is to weaken their Force, to disarm them of their Sting, their Teeth and Venom, if they have any.

any. I take from them all the Terror that Fancy and Opinion have given them, and will no more, if I can help it, suffer my Imagination, than my Taste or Feeling, to be imposed upon. In the next Place, I carefully strengthen myself, see that my State be healthy, and my Nature firm, lest I should complain of the Meat, when the Fault is in my Stomach; or think the Bed ill made when the Cause of my Uneasiness is in the Body. And lastly, when I have reduced the Evil to its own natural size, generally it is of such a pigmy, dwarfish Growth, that I can securely slight it. I can master it with very little Trouble and Industry or at worst with very little Patience.

I LABOUR above all Things to fill my Soul with great and ravishing Pleasures, to possess it with that habitual Poverty of Spirit, Meekness, Purity, Charity, commended to his Disciples by our LORD and Master, that I am generally above the Buz and fluttering of these, rather Impertinences, than Evils; and do often suffer them without being sensible of them. But I can never often enough put the World in Mind of the vast Difference there is between the Fits and Habits of these Virtues. What we could do in a pious Humour, that we should always do, were but the weak Impression once converted into Nature, the short-lived Passion changed into steady Habit. The next Thing to be considered, after the Chearfulness of the Mind, is,

Secondly, THE Health of the Body. Life does so apparently depend on this, that in the vulgar Notion it signifies much the same Thing. It is notorious, Life decays and expires with the Health and Strength of the Body, and when it is protracted after these are gone, it scarce deserves the Name
of

of Life, any more than the Noise of an ill-strung and Ill-tuned Instrument does that of Musick. But I need not teach any Body the Value of Health, or press them to the Preservation of the Body: I should be sufficiently obliging to the World, if I could teach it any Art by which they might be restored to that Blessing which it enjoyed before the Flood, a Life of many hundred Years. But I know no Art that can raise Nature above its known Laws, or retrieve its Youth, if it be now in its Decline. One Thing I know, that we too commonly debauch and corrupt Nature first, and then load her with our Reproaches and Accusations. We should undoubtedly live much longer, and this Life would be more healthy, that is, more vital than it is, did we but observe the Dictates of Religion; and not prefer before them those of Lust and Fancy. How much soever Men complain of the Shortness of Life, most Men do notwithstanding shorten it themselves by some Crime or Error or other. If we could consult the sickly, crazy Part of Mankind, I mean such as are so in the Middle, or almost Beginning of their Years, and demand of them, What blasted their Beauty, and impaired their Strength? what thus violated, their Nature? We should soon be resolved to what Original their Diseases were owing, if at least their Shame and Blushes would give them Leave to inform us. And if we should endeavour to trace the Deaths of most of those who are gone hence before their Time, back to their first Cause, I do not think but our Search would soon end in some Vice or Folly or other. This Man drank too much; the other too much indulged his Appetite: One was devoted to his Lust, and another putrified in his Sloth. All of them, in our common Phrase, did live too fast; but in Truth, and Propriety of Speech, died too fast. For since Life is nothing else but act-

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ing by Reason, every Deviation from it is an Approach towards Death.

BUT to proceed; it is not unusual to see Pride kill one, Passion another, Avarice and Ambition a third, while, to gratify these Affections, the Body is either exposed to Dangers, or worn out by Labour. Now, if we can generally find the Causes of early Deaths in Men's Vices, when so little of other Men's Lives comes to our Knowledge, what think you, should we not be able to discover, if we could enter into the Retirements, and penetrate all the Secrets of Mankind? How many hidden Passions gnaw the Heart? How many secret Sins consume the Strength? Where not only Concealment excludes the Eye, but a Shew of Probity, nay, a real Practice of some particular Virtue, excludes even Suspicion? If then Immorality often contract the Term of Life, it is evident what is to be prescribed for the prolonging it. Religion is the best Physick: It has often mended an ill Constitution, but never spoiled a good one. When did ever Chastity impoverish the Body, or deflower the Face? When did ever Temperance inflame the Blood, or oppress the Spirits? When did ever Industry or Vigilance sour the Humours, and enfeeble the Nerves? No Crudities, no Plethories, no Obstructions, no Acidities, no Stagnations, Extravations, and I know not what hard Names, and harder Things, derive themselves from Religion.

IT is true, a Man may entitle his Folly, his Melancholy, his particular Fancy, or his particular Constitution, Religion. And this may prove mischievous to him, to his Health, to his Strength: But then this is not the Fault of Religion, but the Man; and to speak properly, this is not Religion, tho' it be called so, but it is Fancy and Folly,

Folly, or an ill Constitution disguised under the Garb of Religion. Virtue then is the most probable Way to a long Life, or if not so, at least to a more comfortable and honourable Death. For where an early Death is the Result of a Providence, not a Crime, we must needs meet it with less Amazement ourselves, and our Friends behold it with less Regret and Affliction.

THE third Way of prolonging Life, is to engage the Providence of GOD in its Preservation. If all the Promises GOD has made the Virtuous of a long Life did really signify nothing, I cannot see how we could put up any Request to GOD, relating to temporal Protection, with Faith or Fervour, or so much as Sincerity: But if they signify any Thing, then surely they must signify, that his Providence is actively employed for the Preservation of virtuous Men. And how great Security is this? What can be impossible to him who is the Governor and Creator of the World, in whose Disposal all created Means are, and in whose Power it is, if these be insufficient, to create new ones? To him, whose unerring Laws can never miss of those Ends he aims at? Or if they could, his Power is ever at Hand to supply their Defects, and accommodate and temper them to particular Emergencies; and his Prerogative is under no Ties, no Limitations, but those of his Divine Wisdom. Well might the *Psalmist* say, *I laid me down and slept, for it is Thou, LORD, makest me dwell in Safety.* Every good Man may say the same not in Peace and Health only, but in Sickneſs, in a Tempeſt, whether by Sea or Land, in a Plague, in a Battle, in a Siege, in a Storm: To believe ourselves under the Patronage and Protection of GOD, ſeems to me nothing leſs than to believe, that He will make thoſe Things we are concerned in flow with a ſmooth and gentle Stream;

that He will place us in a Condition of Life, safe and agreeable; or if not, that in Distresses and Dangers He will contrive the Methods of our Rescue, and where the ordinary are insufficient, find out extraordinary; that He will concur and cooperate with the natural Course of Things, or if He see it fit, that He will exert a supernatural Force, and vouchsafe an extraordinary Succour. Plainly thus, tho' I know not the unsearchable Methods of Divine Providence, yet from God's concerning Himself for my Good, I may boldly infer, that in my Sickneſs I may hope for that from God which I cannot from the Skill of my Phyſician; that in troublesome Times I may expect that from Providence, which I cannot from the Wiſdom, Juſtice, or Power of the Magiſtrate; that in neceſſitous, intricate Circumſtances, I may promiſe myſelf that Iſſue from his Favour, which I cannot from the Prudence, Integrity, or Bounty of my Friends: And in a Word, that in all Caſes I can hope for that from my Prayers, which I could not from human Power or Policy. The Sum of all is, all the natural Means of our Security and Life are in the Hands of God. And if theſe ſhould be deficient, nothing can reſtrain him from exerting a ſupernatural Force for our Preſervation. His fixed and univerſal Laws are infinitely wiſe. But if at any Time our Affairs ſhould require his immediate Interpoſal, I know not why I ſhould fancy his Prerogative ſo bounded, that He cannot, or will not interpoſe. And tho' his Pavilion be thick Clouds, and He walk upon the Wings of the Wind; tho' his Providence be a great Abyſs, and the Swiftneſs and Secreſy of his Actions elude our Search, and baffle our Enquiries, ſo that we cannot diſcern when He acts by Prerogative, when by Law, yet I doubt no but that He does frequently exert a miraculous and extraordinary Power.

THIS

THIS being so, it is plain that our great Business is to engage the Providence of GOD on our Behalf, that we may have an unerring Guide of this dubious and floating Life, a firm Support of this mortal corruptible Nature: And I think I need not prove, that Religion is the effectual Way to oblige GOD: If this be the great Message that we have received of the Son of GOD, *that GOD is Light*, then St. *John's* Inference must needs be good, that he only who walks in the Light, can hold a Communion with Him, that is be dear and acceptable to Him: A spiritual and rational Worship must be the only Method to endear ourselves to a GOD, who is a wise Spirit. Nay, though all the Precepts of Religion should not be necessarily founded in their Agreeableness to the Divine Nature, yet still since they are the Precepts of GOD, we need search for no other Reason for the Acceptableness of our Obedience. It is true, all the Heights of Purity, to which the Gospel invites us, are not necessary to the Health and Strength of the Body; yet are they serviceable to the Perfection and Improvement of our Nature: They are not all indispensable to the happy Conduct of our temporal Affairs; but they are useful to the Felicity and Glory of our eternal; and therefore the more religious we are, the more we shall please GOD. But I will insist no longer on so uncontested a Point; Nature itself dictates, that an Imitation of their Virtues is the strongest Obligation we can lay upon the Wise or Good; and Obedience the most effectual Recommendation of us to the Sovereign Powers: Whether therefore we consider GOD as the *Best*, or the *Greatest*, the Characters under which the Light of Nature did ever represent Him, Religion, that is, Imitation and Obedience, are the only Ways by which we may secure his Favour.

NOR is Virtue less apt to procure the Favour and Amity of Man, than that of GOD. It fences us about with the Arms and Succours of Mankind: It guards us with all their Eyes, and with all their Prayers: For their Love and Reverence make them both active and wakeful in our Service.

How directly repugnant to all this are the Effects of Irreligion? It leaves us no other Safeguard than that of our own Strength and Vigilance; which, to speak properly, is to deliver us up into the Hands of Folly and Fear, our Weakness and Cowardise. For alas, what were my single Reason or Force, when I have neither GOD nor Man to second me! How much less when the Indignation of the one, and the secret Aversion or open Enmity of the other, scare and intimidate me! How can a Man hold out against Dangers, if he be betrayed by his own Guilt within, and his Reason, overthrown by ominous Fears, do not lessen, but multiply his Terrors! Hence is that of Solomon, *The Wicked flee when no Man pursueth, but the Righteous are bold as a Lion*: Abandoned by GOD and Man, he seems at last abandoned by himself too.

THE Sum of what I have said amounts to this; *First*, I have proved that the Date of Life is not fatal and unalterable: From whence it necessarily followed, that it was capable of being prolonged or protracted. Therefore I proceeded,

Secondly, To consider by what Means it might be prolonged: And here, supposing that nothing, could be more conducive to this than a cheerful Mind, a healthful Body, and a propitious Providence, I have made it evident, that these are to be sought in the Practice of Religion and Virtue, which is nothing else than what inspired Authors have

have frequently taught; *Length of Days are in her Right-hand, and in her Left-hand Riches and Honour. Thou shalt come to thy Grave in a full Age, like as a Shock of Corn cometh in its Season.* A blessed and perfect Religion! at once the Guard and Joy of Life! at once the Support and Delight of human Nature!

BUT against this whole Discourse it will be objected, *First*, How is this that you contend for? How are those Texts which make Length of Days the Reward of Obedience to the Divine Laws, reconcileable with those other, which, as far as concerns their temporal Effects, seem to equal Wisdom and Folly, and level Righteousness with Wickedness, asserting the Promiscuousness of all Events to the Virtuous and Vicious? *All Things come alike to all: There is one Event to the Righteous, and to the Wicked, to the Good, and to the Clean, and to the Unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: As is the Good, so is the Sinner, and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an Oath,* Eccles. ix. 2. And this is extended as far as Death itself; *How dieth the wise Man? As the Fool,* Eccles. ii. 16. Innumerable are the Answers to this Objection, but one only fits my Purpose, which is plainly this.

THESE, and the like Speeches, design not to derogate from the Efficacy of Virtue, or weaken the Force of the Divine Promises, but to humble the Vanity of Man, and convert his Fondness for the World into a greater for a better; and are not therefore to be understood in such a general and unlimited Sense, as if there were no Difference between the Righteous and the Wicked, with Respect to temporal Good and Evil, Life and Death; but only thus, that the Righteous are not so universally

verfally exempt from temporal Evils, but that some or other of them in all Ages, are liable to them, even to an untimely Death itfelf. But what then? Such extraordinary Inftances of an inſcrutable Providence, ought no more to derogate from the Excellence of Wiſdom and Virtue, or the Veracity of God, that ſome few Shipwrecks ought to diſcredit Navigation, or the failing of ſome few Traders diſparage Art and Induſtry. It is enough that the Experienced and Skilful, the Careful and Diligent, generally ſail and trade ſucceſsfully. And this may in Part ſuffice for an Answer to another Objection of the ſame Nature with this; only that this relates to all Events in general, but the Objection following to a particular one.

If long Life be a great Bleſſing at preſent, and recommends Men to greater afterwards, and if Religion be on both theſe Accounts entitled to it, whence is it that an immature Death ſnatches away ſometimes the beſt of Men, that it ſtops them in the very Progreſs of their Virtue, and in a full Career towards Perfection and Glory? I answer,

THE Providence of GOD is a great Deep, *His Judgments are unſearchable, and his Ways paſt finding out.*

2. I CANNOT believe that this early Death, which intercepts the Fruits of a growing Virtue, ſhall bereave the Virtuous of any Degree of that future Glory, to which ſuch Fruits would have entitled them: I ſhould rather think, with the Author of the Book of Wiſdom, that having completed their Perfection in a little Time, they had in a little Time finiſhed their Courſe, and by what they did do, gave ſuch plain Proofs of what they would

would do, that God rewards their Purposes as He does the Actions of others, and therefore hasteneth to take them to Himself. But however this Matter be, I am content to believe,

3. THAT as God orders all the particular Events of Life to the Good of those that love Him, so much more must He dispose this biggest Event, to their Interest and Benefit: And therefore this immature Death is doubtless, to the Righteous, better than Life, though we should not be able to discern why. They die in their Perfection, their Glory yet unsullied, their Felicity unstained, no vile Temptation, no Misfortune having yet triumphed over them; an Advantage which we much admire when we see great and good Men surprized, or overpowered by Weaknesses and Calamities: For then we cannot but acknowledge, that if Death had come sooner it had been much kinder; for they had been gathered into the Storehouse of the Dead, like Corn into the Granary, before unseasonable or immoderate Rain had corrupted it, or any malignant Vapour blasted it.

Lastly, I know not how Heaven has dealt with these its Favourites: Perdvventure it is in the moral, as in the political World, some are born to that Greatness which others acquire with Labour. He never dies too soon who dies ripe and perfect, and if these Divine Souls were soon enriched with more Light and Beauty with more impetuous Inclinations to Virtue than other Men; if their short Life were so innocent, so bright, that out of a particular Grace God thought fit to exempt them from the Miseries of this Life; or that upon Account of a particular Pre-eminence, they needed not pass thro' the Trial, the Discipline and Purgations of it, on either of these Supposals we ought not to commiserate, but revere their Fate.



C H A P. III.

Of improving Life, or living much in a little Time.

TO understand aright what it is I here aim at, what I mean by the Improvement of Life, it is necessary to call to Mind the true Notion of Life laid down in the Beginning, that it is the right Use of all our Powers and Faculties, the rational Exercise, the wise Employment of our whole Nature.

Now if this be so, it is plain that we live just as much as we act and enjoy, I mean always rationally; that as we advance and grow up towards a Perfection of Nature, the more is Life also raised and refined. Thus if the Life of the Understanding be to think, to discover and contemplate Truth and Goodness, then surely its Life is enlarged with its Knowledge: If the Life of the Soul of Man, I mean his Will and Affections, be to chuse and pursue, admire and love true Good, then certainly our Life is perfected with our Virtue, and augmented with our Religion.

IN a Word, if the Life of Man do not consist in the Motion of Animal Spirits, but the Exercise of his rational Powers and Faculties; if the true Health of Man be not to be judged by the Regularity of his Pulse, but the Harmony of his Affections; if finally, the Thing called Life be not to be measured by Hours, and Days, and Months, and

and Years, but by Activity and Enjoyment; then sure I may boldly conclude, that the more regularly and constantly we pursue the proper Business of our Nature, the more actively and vigorously we are carried on towards that which is our proper Good, so much the more we live, so much the more true, natural, and pure Life; and all this is no other Philosophy than what the Wiseman has long ago advanced; *For honourable Age is not that which standeth in Length of Time, nor that is measured by Number of Years. But Wisdom is the grey Hair unto Men, and an unspotted Life is old Age,* Wisdom iv. 8, 9. This is a Truth of vast Importance; were it but once thoroughly imbibed, it would relieve all the Pressures, and redress all the Grievances of Life.

WE complain of Life, that it is dull and nauseous, we impeach it of Vanity and Vexation, of Shortness and Uncertainty. How would this one Notion, well pursued, soon silence all their Complaints? He would never think Life too short, who were ripe for Death: He would never complain that Life were uncertain, who were always ready to die: He would not accuse Life of Dulness and Nauseousness, who was daily advancing his Discovery of Truth, and enlarging his Possession of Good: Nor would he ever charge it with Vanity and Vexation, were his Actions still wise and rational; For thus every Act of Life would be an Act of Fruition too, being both agreeable to Nature, and attended by a delightful Approbation and Complacency of Conscience. By this Time it is plain what the Design of this Chapter is, namely, to compensate the Shortness by the Excellence of Life, and redress the Vanity and Vexation of it by its Perfection; a Design, I confess, worthy of a more comprehensive Mind,

Mind, and a more elevated Fancy than mine; a Design, demanding all the Wisdom and Experience of an active, and all the Thought and Learning of a contemplative Life; a Design, in a Word, that requires at once the Prudence of old Age, and the Vigour of blooming Years.

I SHALL here discourse but very briefly, and in general Terms, of the Improvement of Life. All the Advice I shall offer here, is,

FIRST, *That we endeavour to perfect and exalt our Nature.*

SECONDLY, *That we begin to live betimes; or if we cannot now do that, our Years being far spent, that we begin to live immediately.*

THIRDLY, *That we avoid those Things that are Enemies to our true Life.*

FIRST, *We must endeavour to perfect and exalt our Nature.* The Necessity of this will be very conspicuous to any one, who shall consider that the Perfection of our Acts depends upon the Perfection of our Faculties and Powers; just as the Pleasure of Seeing does on the Goodness of the Eye, or that of Hearing on the Perfection of the Ear: So much, and much more, does the Beauty of human Action and the Gust of all our Enjoyments depend upon the Clearness of the Judgment, the Rectitude of the Will, and the Vigour of our Passions. To render this Argument yet more visible and palpable, let us consider how mean a Thing Man were, and how contemptible Life, without Cultivation or Improvement. The Body is but a Heap of Dust; something there needs to stamp a Value upon it; something there must be to give Sweetness to the Eye,
 Charm

Charm to the Tongue, and Grace to Motion: It is a mere Machine, alike capable of being made the Instrument of Cruelty or Mercy, of Lust or Chastity, of Avarice or Charity: It is Religion must purge and sanctify it; it is Wisdom must conduct and guide, and make it the happy Instrument of great and glorious Actions. The Spirit within us is a volatile, mutable, unsteady Thing, capable of all Sorts of Impressions, suspended as it were between Heaven and Earth, floating between the different Shores of Good and Evil: Knowledge and Virtue form it into Angel, stamp a Sort of Divinity upon it; for we are not born, but made great: It is Wisdom that imprints it with bright Ideas, that impregnates it with noble Passions, and determines its Tendency towards its true Good and supreme Felicity. Our Conversation with the World is naturally nothing else but a dull Intercourse of Forms, and Ceremonies, and Civilities; a nauseous Circulation of the same tasteless and superficial Entertainments; a tedious and repeated Pursuit of vain mistaken Ends, and often baffled Designs: It is Virtue and Knowledge that give Relish to our Enjoyments, and Life and Spirit to all our Actions; that lead us on towards excellent Ends, and inspire us with immortal Hopes. Our Fortune and Condition in the World is naturally a fluctuating unstable Agitation, made up of a confused and motly Variety of Events: Knowledge and Virtue fix the floating Island, and give Light and Beauty to the Chaos.

I CAN never carry this Argument too far, and therefore I will yet a little more particularly consider what Increase of Life we derive from perfecting our Natures. Does Life consist in the Exercise of our Faculties? True Life then is the Portion of the Active and Industrious: The dull and heavy Motion of the Sluggard is but a faint Imitation or Re-

semblance of it: It is a diseased languishing Thing, a Compound or Mixture, wherein there seems to be more of Death than Life. Does Life consist in Fruition? How dark and dismal are those of the Wicked, compared to the calm and bright Days of the Good! For what can there be like Enjoyment to that Man, who dares make no Reflections on the past, nor can entertain any just Hopes of the future? and whose Mind concurs not with his present Passions, and refuses to join in the senseless Designs he is upon? Does Life lastly consist, as I have proved it does, in the Knowledge of Truth and Love of Goodness? How scanty, narrow, and beggarly is the Life of a Fool and Sinner, compared to that of the Wise and Virtuous! *Tully said, One virtuous Day was to be preferred before a sinful Immortality:* This is true in the present Sense and Notion of Life. Error and Ignorance are as it were a Disease, or State of Insensibility and Death to the Understanding. The Mind that is utterly ignorant of Objects worthy of it, has nothing to employ itself upon, or at least nothing that gives it any solid Satisfaction: But the Mind which is filled with the Knowledge of excellent Things, has a great Variety of Scenes to entertain it, and never wants some fresh Occasion of Delight and Wonder.

BUT it will be said, Does not the Fool behold the visible World, as well as the Philosopher? He does; but just as he reads a Poem, without discovering the Artfulness of its Contrivance, the Richness of the Fancy, or Variety of the Incidents. The Sinner hears Talk too of an invisible World, of moral Perfections here, and of divine Joys hereafter; but he hears it unmoved, unaffected, which shews he has no lively Notion, no distinct Perception of any Thing of this Kind: The Glass is dulled
and

and sullied; Beauty itself would lose all Charm, reflected thus.

BUT human Perfection consists not in Knowledge alone, but also in the Purity of the Heart, in the Regulation of the Affections, in Love and true Liberty; that is, the Heart must be set upon Objects worthy of it, and we must pursue our true Good with Vigour and Constancy: And this is that which renders Life truly delightful and uniform. Without Objects to engage our Affections, we can scarcely be said to live; we shall be becalmed, and scarce be sensible of the Breath we draw: And unless these Objects be worthy and agreeable, all is but Storm and Tempest, Cheat and Torment; and our Faculties are not rationally employed, but abused, deluded, depraved, tortured.

COULD we but comprehend what all this did amount to, or at least, could we feel and experience it, we should soon discern that the Wise and Good, and they only, did truly live: For these only know God and themselves; these only admire, and love, and rejoice, and hope rationally; and these only are not confined nor limited in their Knowledge or their Affections; for the Objects of both are infinite: Their Minds can never travel so far in the Contemplation of God, and the most important Truths; but that there is still a new World to be further discovered: Nor can their Admiration or Love, their Joy or Hope, so enlarge themselves, as ever to equal the Objects of these Passions, and reach the utmost that is in them.

BUT it is probable, after all, the Fool and Sinner will pretend to engross the Goods of the Earth; as if they alone were to possess and enjoy them, as if they were the Heirs of this World, the Righteous

of the other: But this is a vain Fancy, and has been often baffled. Who can hasten more to enjoy, than he who knows the true Value and right Use of all Things? And who can enjoy more in any Thing, than he who at once gratifies his Reason and his Appetite, and pleases his Inclination, without forfeiting his true Liberty? If to be fooled and cheated, if to be ensnared and tormented by the Things of this World, be a Pleasure, in this the Christian must indeed give Place to the Infidel, the righteous Man to the Sinner.

THE Sum then of the whole Matter is; Life in the foolish, mean, and vicious Soul, seems like a little Rill of Water, confined within narrow and scanty Bounds; or like the Light of a Candle inclosed within the narrow Compass of a dark Lanthorn; but in the Wise and Understanding, it is like a mighty Stream which swells above its Banks, and spreads itself over a vast Plain; or like Light unconfined, which diffuses and darts itself over all the Face of Nature. Ah! therefore how much does it import me to fill my Understanding with bright and lovely Images, with pleasing and important Notions, with all the Truths that can serve, either to delight or guide, to nourish or adorn, to support or fortify me in this World, or advance my Rank in the Joys of another? How much does it import me, to fill my Soul with Love; Love of all that is good or great; Love of all that is pure or sacred; Love of all that is beautiful or delightful? And lastly, that my Body be a fit Instrument of such a Mind, it does not a little import me, that this be strong and healthy, vigorous and vivacious.

THE Second Way to improve Life, is, *to begin to live betimes; or at least, if your Years be far spent, to begin to live immediately,* which is all we can do.

Life,

Life, in my Notion of it, dawns with our Reason, and grows up to Ripeness and Perfection with the Virtue, Liberty, and Tranquility of the Soul. To be wise, and to be religious, this is to live; for in this consists Fruition and Enjoyment; in this the Health and Vigour of our Faculties; in this the Harmony and Beauty of the whole Frame of our Nature: And this, and no other, is a rational and agreeable Exercise of our Powers and Capacities. Whoever therefore will improve Life, ought to begin the next Moment to assert his Liberty, and to give himself up to true Wisdom.

It is strange to see how Men put off this, or attempt it only superficially, and by the By; they prefer, I will not say, Trades and Husbandry, and various Sorts of Knowledge, foreign and remote from the Service and Conduct of human Life; (ah! that Time were but so well spent in general;) but they prefer even Dressing, Painting, Drinking, Gaming, and all, not only the most silly and trifling, but the most vile and infamous Ways of consuming Time, before true Wisdom. Nay, among those that make Profession of Wisdom, and pretend to have dedicated themselves to the Doctrine of *Jesus*, it is common to see great Numbers Hearing, Talking, Reading, Disputing, without ever making any Use of those Truths they study and contend for, or feeling any Warmth or Influence of them; like those wise ones in Temporals, who are laying up Provision all their Life long, which they will never use, never enjoy. Ah wretched Consumption of Life! How soon will the last Minute expire? And the unhappy Man will not have lived one Year, one Month, one Day; but will have wasted a precious Treasure of Time, and he must go immediately and account for it.

WELL, let the World live after its own Fashion, I plainly see the Point I am to make; no Day, no Hour shall pass me unemploy'd: Every Moment, if I can, I will grow wiser and better: It is not how long I last, but how much I live: I will know, I will act, I will enjoy To-day; and then I am sure I have lived a Day. This most propose to do, some Time or other; but not To-day. And why not To-day? Why not presently? Is there any Evil in being immediately wise, immediately free, immediately rational, immediately happy? It cannot be, if the State I am in be really good; if the Pleasures I enjoy be really such as my Reason can share in, and my Conscience can approve; I then indeed live: There is no Need of Change and Reformation, but Continuance and Perseverance: But if they be not, why will I not exchange false for true, and irrational for rational Pleasures? If I am in the Right, if my Condition be good and safe, it is well; there is nothing further to be done, but to maintain my Ground: But if I am in the Wrong, if the Foundation be unsound, and whilst I dream not of it, my Health and Fortune consume inwardly, waste and decay insensibly; why am I fond of the Cheat? Why am I unwilling to be undeceived and disabused? And why not presently? The Reason is plain; they acknowledge the Representation I have made of a virtuous and rational Life, is very pleasant: But to be born into this new State, to come forth into this moral Light, is as troublesome as the Infants being born into the natural. They love the Ease and Wealth of a prosperous Trader; but not the Hardships of his Apprenticeship, the Thrift and Confinement of his Beginnings: They love Laurels and triumphal Arches, the Glory and the Pleasure of Victory; but cannot endure the Toils and Hazards of War. Or plainly thus; they admire Liberty of Mind, Serenity and rational Joy, but

but it will cost them much Labour and Pains to purchase it.

THUS the wretched Man, fearing the Regimen of Physick, wears out a miserable Life in the Pains of a Disease; and one that has a Cancer or Gangreen chuses to waste and rot in Pain by Piece-meal, rather than undergo the short Pain of Amputation. Nay, what is worse than all, Men are fond of their Diseases, love the Things that increase and nourish them, as the Gross and Corpulent do Rest, the Lethargick Sleep, and Hydropick Drink.

THIS is the State, the deplorable State of the far greater Part of Mankind; a State of Disease and Death, a State of Bondage and Captivity, a State of Insatiation and Enchantment: And I very much fear, that whatever Motives can be extracted out of the Subject I am now upon, will be too weak and feeble: For what can all the Discourses in the World about rational Pleasure and the Satisfaction of a regular and virtuous Life amount to, with Men wholly given up to Sensuality, and incapable of relishing any pure and sacred Delights? If I have succeeded so far, as to possess them with an Opinion that a Life of Reason or Religion is a Life of Pleasure, though they have not any clear and lively Notion of this Pleasure, it is the utmost I can hope for: But to persuade Men to embrace this Life, there is Need of all the Arguments that either Reason or Religion can administer; and these too pointed with all the Life and Spirit, with all the Edge and Flame that Wit or Judgment can give them; a Task too hard for me. O God! Thou Lover of Mankind, aid me by thy Spirit, while I strive to prevail with Young and Old to seek thy Glory and their own Happiness, to pursue Virtue and true Pleasure!

I WILL

I WILL first address myself to the Young; and then to those more advanced in Years.

1. To the Younger. You are now in your Bloom: What glorious Fruit may you bring forth! What Honour may you do GOD! What Service may you render your Relations, and your Country! And what Joys and Blessings may you heap on yourselves! Time and Tide seem to wait on you; even the Providence and Grace of GOD (with Reverence be it said) seem to attend and court you. But ah! remember, they will not do so for ever; these Smiles and Invitations of Heaven and Nature will not last continually; your Infidelity or Ingratitude, your Folly and Sensuality, will soon blast and wither all these fair Hopes, turn all your Pleasures into Gall and Wormwood, and all your blessed Advantages into the Instruments of your Ruin, and Aggravations of it too. Grace will soon retire, Nature degenerate, Time grow old, the World despise you, the God of it frown upon you, and Conscience, guilty Conscience will be either stupified and benumb'd, or fester and rage within you; and Death will come, and then Judgment: And how sudden it will come, ah! who knows? Sudden and early Deaths ought to convince you on what uncertain Ground you stand: The Scythe of Death stays not always 'till the Harvest be ripe; but promiscuously mows down the Young and Old. Ah! begin, begin then to live: Seize upon Pleasure and Happiness, while they stand courting and inviting you: Pursue Virtue and Glory immediately, while the Difficulties are fewer, your Strength and Aids greater; your Judgments being not yet corrupted by the Maxims, or rather the Fancies of the World; nor your Wills yet disabled and enslaved by a Custom of Sin. Ah! venture not to devote your Youth to Vanity and Folly, on Pre-
sumption

sumption of devoting your Age to Religion. For if this were a rational and just Design in itself, yet it is to you a very unsafe and doubtful one: For which Way can you insure Life? Or on what Ground can you confide on the Morrow? *Beast not of To-morrow; for thou knowest not what a Day may bring forth.*

I KNOW what Opposition will be raised against this Kind of Exhortation, and with what rude Reflections it will be treated. *Come, say they, this is our Spring; let us enjoy ourselves whilst we have Time and Vigour. Religion looks too grave and formal for these Years: We shall have Time enough to be dull and melancholy. Come on then, let us enjoy ourselves as becomes our Youth; this is our Portion, and our Lot is this: And whatever they who have now out-lived themselves, whose Blood is sour, and Spirits low, may gravely talk against these Things; they too, when Time was, admired what they now would have us despise, and committed themselves, what they now condemn in us.* In Answer to this, let us pass over the Flourish, and examine the Sense and Reason of this Sort of Talk. The Substance of it may be reduced to three Heads.

First, YOUTH is the Season of Pleasure, i. e. Sin and Folly; Inclination and Opportunity conspire to invite you to it, therefore you indulge it. What a strange Argument is this? Is there any Period of our Life, from our Cradle almost to our Coffin; I mean, from the Moment we arrive at the Use of Reason to our Grave, wherein some Sin or other is not in Season? May not Manhood defend Ambition, and old Age Covetousness, by the same Argument by which you do your sinful Pleasures? If Inclination to a Folly would justify our Commission of it; in what Part of Life should we begin

begin to be wise and virtuous? It will be hard to find the Time wherein we shall have no Inclination to any Sin or Folly: Or rather, if this be so, who can be guilty? The Adulterer will impute his Uncleanneſs to the Violence of his Luſt; the Murderer his Bloodſhed to the Violence of his Rage; i. e. each of them their Sins to the Strength of their Inclinations: And if your Argument be good, they will be innocent. But do not deceive yourſelves; then is your Obedience, as moſt acceptable to God, ſo moſt indiſpenſable in itſelf, when you lie under Temptations to Sin; and Heaven is propoſed as a Reward, not of following, but conquering your Inclinations.

THE *Second* Part of the Objection, is, That Religion doth not look graceful in young Years. This I could never well underſtand: If you be ſo fooliſh as to think Religion conſiſts in ſour Faces, or an affected Morofeneſs and Sullenneſs, or in Stupidity and Melancholy; this becomes no Age: But if by Religion you underſtand Devotion towards your Parents and Superiors, Temperance and Chaſtity in yourſelves, and ſuch like Virtues; I muſt needs ſay, nothing can appear to me more lovely than Religion in Youth: What can better become thoſe who poſſeſs the Gifts of Nature in their Perfection, than Gratitude to the God of Nature? What can be a greater Glory to the Young, than Obedience to Parents, and Reverence to their Elders and Superiors? What does more preſerve, or better become Strength, than Sobriety and Temperance? What is a more charming or more laſting Ornament to Beauty than Modeſty and Chaſtity?

AFTER all this, it is a vain Thing to comfort yourſelves, with ſaying, That the Grave and Wiſe, when they had the ſame Inclinations you now have,
did

did as you do, indulge and gratify them: For *first*, this is not universally true; and *secondly*, the less they did it, the more were they honoured and beloved; but *thirdly*, if they did, it is certain they have bitterly condemned it, and repented of it. And is it not strangely absurd, that you should propose to yourselves nothing in the Lives of the Wise and Virtuous, but their Frailties and Errors for your Example? That you should pitch upon that only for your Imitation, which all the Wise and Good detest and bemoan, as their Sin and Shame?

To conclude this Address to the younger Sort. Unless there be any who are possessed with a Spirit of Infidelity, against which I will not now enter the Lists, all the Pretences you can possibly form for your deferring to devote yourselves instantly to Wisdom and Religion, are founded on two Suppositions, of which the one is false, and the other absurd: The false one is, that Sin is a State of Pleasure, Virtue of Trouble and Uneasiness; the contrary of which is, I think, sufficiently demonstrated through this whole Treatise: And would you but be prevailed with to taste the Pleasures of a sincere Virtue, your Experience would soon confute this Fancy. What Madness then is it to be afraid of becoming happy too soon? Ah! how differently are we affected under the Maladies of the Mind and of the Body? Did the Lame or Blind, the Lepers, the Lunaticks, or Demoniacks, ever entreat our LORD to defer their Cure, and give them Leave to enjoy Miseries, Diseases, and Devils a little longer? The other Supposition is absurd, which is, That you will repent hereafter, Must you then repent hereafter? Must this be the Fruit of all your sinful Pleasures; Guilt and Remorse, Grief and Fear, Distress and Agony of Soul? Do Revelation and Reason, Death and Judgment;

Judgment; do all your sober and retired Thoughts preach you this one Lesson, *Repentance*? And yet can you resolve to plunge yourselves in that Filthiness which must be washed off with Tears? Can you resolve to indulge those cheating and deceitful Lusts which will one Day fill your Soul with Shame and Sorrow, with Distraction, Horror, and Amazement? Ah Infatuation! ah Bewitchery! that ever a rational Creature should live in such open Hostility against his Reason! And yet, if Repentance, after many Years, and innumerable Sins, would be more easy; if your Sins would be more easily conquered; this Frenzy would not want some little Colour: But how contrary is this to Truth? Which puts me in Mind of another Sort of Readers, to whom I am now to apply myself, namely,

2. To those who are advanced in Years. It is observed of *Cæsar*, by *Suetonius*, that lighting upon the Statue of *Alexander* the Great, in the Temple of *Hercules* at *Gades*, and reflecting on himself, that he had yet done nothing remarkable at those Years, wherein that brave Man had over-run all the East, he blushed under the keen Reproaches of his own Mind, and groaned under the Conscience of his Sloth; and presently desired to be dismissed from his Questorship, that he might pursue Glory and Immortality. Had you but one Spark, I will not say of the Zeal of a Christian, but of this Generosity of a *Pagan*, you would blush to think that you have not yet put on the Armour of Light, at an Age in which many others have been covered with Laurels; that you have not started at those Years, in which some others have finished, tho' not their Race, yet all the Difficulties of it: The miserable Account that you will give of thirty, forty, peradventure of fifty Years! I will not say, that you have

have lived to no Purpose, but to the worst imaginable; ignorant, enslaved to Lust, oppressed by Guilt! All that you have done, is, *You have treasured up Wrath against the Day of Wrath*: For this to be the Product of so many Years! Shame and Confusion! But greater, infinitely greater to go on thus. Sin may to some seem the Misfortune of Youth, but it is unquestionably the Reproach of Age: Unhappy Nature, and unhappy Education bear a Share of the Imputation in Youth; but in these Years your own Obstinacy and Choice engross the whole Guilt. Young People are like weak Barks, which in boisterous Seas and Winds carry too much Sail, and too little Ballast; their Judgment is weak and unresolved, and their Passions light and violent as Hurricanes: But riper Years do, or should, bring on wiser Thoughts, cooler, sedater Tempers; and therefore certainly Sin in these carries a deeper Guilt and Shame in it. The raw unexperienced Sinner perisheth whilst he but tastes and gazes; the Virgin Soul coming into a strange World, is deflower'd whilst it gratifies its Curiosity, like *Dinab* when she went forth only to see the Daughters of the Land: But the full-grown Sinner sins against, not only the Preacher's Instruction, but his own Experience too: He repeats those Sins, which he has often confessed to be his Folly and his Shame: and returns like foolish Mariners, to treacherous Seas, where they were shipwreck'd but the other Day: If this be not to outrage Conscience, defy Reason, and dare God, what is? No, you will say, you too resolve to repent hereafter: Hereafter! How ill does this Word sound in one who begins to bow already under the Weight of Years? Hereafter! How ill does this Language become this decaying mouldring Body? But suppose the Wheels of Time would stop, tho' running now down a Headlong Precipice; suppose your Sun

would for a while stand still; yet what a Work have you to finish! What Guilt to be wash'd out! What Sins to vanquish! And what a Day of Judgment to prepare for! Are these slight Considerations? Will your Sins, think you, be easily removed, when their Number is swoln, not only by Length of Time, but also by an uncontrolled Licentiousness? For a Novice in Sin, is aw'd by Modesty, held in by Scruples, and discouraged by Regret and Remorse: But the Veteran Sinner is carried away by a Torrent of debauched Affections, and repeats his Follies with a relentless Confidence, and an Authority that brooks no Opposition. Will it be an easy Task to subdue those Sins, which have maintained a long and undisturbed Dominion over you? What shall awaken that Sinner, who, like *Solomon's Drunkard*, *Prov. xxiii. 35.* is insensible of Stripes and Wounds; and alas! when roused out of the Arms of his *Dalilah*, his Locks, like *Sampson's*, are cut off, the Spirits retired, his Strength impaired, and the Force of his Enemy augmented; and with what will he conquer? Is it, lastly, a trivial Thing to appear before the Judgment Seat of GOD, that you should think a Moment will serve to prepare for it? I will suppose the Judge of the whole World as merciful as you can desire Him, if you will suppose Him too (with Reverence be it spoke) to have so much Sense as not to be imposed on, and this alone will make that Judgment formidable.

I VERY much fear that both Young and Old entertain too mild a Notion of that Day, and so elude and baffle the Force of the most powerful Motive to Virtue and Religion the Gospel has; I shall therefore close this Exhortation to begin to live immediately, with a short Reflection on that Day.

WE must first bid Adieu to this World, to every Thing in it that is dear to us, and die e're we can go and appear before GOD: What a perfect Mortification of all our sensual Appetites is necessary, e're we can calmly part with all below! What a long Experience of Love and Duty is necessary to confirm and assure the Soul against all its Fears and Apprehensions! What a vigorous Faith to carry us through this dark Passage into another World! When we are got there, what a strict Trial are we to undergo! There all Disguises will be taken off, and every Thing appear in its naked Nature: There all our Superstructures of Hay and Stubble will be burnt up, only pure solid Virtue will bear the Test: There darling Vices will not pass under the Disguise of Sins of Infirmary: There an honest Sloth and harmless Luxury, will not be thought innocent: There some few good Fits will not pass for godly Sorrow, nor some feeble and short-liv'd Attempts for Repentance: There the Effects of a lucky Constitution, will not be crowned as the Works of Grace and Fruits of the Divine Life: There, in a Word, Talk will not pass for Action, nor Censure of others commute for Mortification in ourselves: Finally, nothing shall be rewarded there but a conquering Faith, an active Charity, an humble, constant Zeal, patient, persevering Hopes, spiritual Joys and pious Fears. This needs no Application: Begin, begin to live before you die; begin to repent and reform before you be judged.

A *Third Way* of reproving Life, is, *to avoid and cut off all those Things that are injurious to it*: Such are Sloth that wastes, and Impertinence that embroils it: Coldness or Remissness in Religion that dispirits and dilutes, Levity and Inconstancy that disorder and confound it: And finally, all those Evils that sour and embitter it.

First, WE must avoid Idleness. Sloth is the Rust of Time; Sleep is an Image of Death, and Sloth of Sleep. The Life of the Sluggish is but a waking Dream, a Vacation from all Business and true Enjoyment too; a Cessation and Stop, tho' not of Time, which still runs on, yet of the very Powers and Faculties of the Soul; whereas Life consists in the Exercise of both. How remote then must Idleness be from improving or exalting Life? It never plows nor sows, and therefore never reaps: It never plants nor sets, and therefore never gathers any Fruit: Nothing great was ever performed by it, nothing great ever enjoyed by it. And shall the richest Fruit that ever grew upon any of the Trees of Paradise, Wisdom, and Virtue, *i. e.* Knowledge and Life, be gathered by a sluggish Hand? No, though no Angel or flaming Sword stop his Way, yet are there Difficulties in it, too many and too great for this heavy dastardly Animal to conquer. Even temporal Goods cannot be obtained without the Travel of the Mind, and toil of the Body; and yet what lean, starved, and beggarly Blessings are these compared to those I treat of! The rich Man may starve for Want of true Pleasure, in the Midst of his glittering Heaps: Sorrow may sit heavy on the Heart of the Conqueror, or the Bride, even on the Days of solemn Triumph: The Prince may be a Slave, an *Ægyptian* Slave, even while he reigns with absolute and uncontrolled Power: But Life and Pleasure, Content and Happiness, are the inseparable Companions of Wisdom and Virtue. Let no Man therefore flatter himself with the Hopes of such a Treasure, who lives idly, and at his Ease: He must pray, meditate, watch, and exercise himself in Industry, Sobriety, and Purity, who will overcome the Corruptions of his Nature, and obtain the Tranquility and Liberty of a true Christian.

Secondly,

Secondly, IMPERTINENCE, or being buſied and employed in Trifles, is as different from Sloth, as Motion from Reſt; but yet ſuch a wretched Conſumption of Time cannot deſerve the Name of Life: For this is not Activity of Soul, but a poor and mean debaſing of it. Fancy, and that a ſilly and extravagant one, may be ſaid to live, but Reaſon cannot. That Idleneſs, which conſiſts in heavy paſſive Dullneſs, is like a State of dead Sleep; that which conſiſts in a fluttering and impertinent Activity, is nothing elſe but a giddy Ferment of the Spirits, and Agitation of the Fancy, the incoherent diſjointed Thoughts, the conſuſed and fruitleſs Projections of a Dream: And we may almoſt as properly ſay of him that dreams, that he eats and drinks, fights or travels, or whatever he fancied himſelf to do, as we can of this Sort of Sluggard, that he lives. It is true, could a Man be for ever impertinent, this Sort of Idleneſs would ſeem to ſome Men to have no great Evil in it: But how could ſuch a Mind bear the Shock of Miſfortunes? How could ſuch a Soul diſcharge the great Duties of Society? How could it entertain itſelf with Objects agreeable to a rational Nature? And if it could do none of theſe Things, it is impoſſible to conceive how it could be other than miſerable: For though we could ſuppoſe ſuch a Creature to be ſo mere a Trifle, as never to be nearly concerned in any Changes of Fortune, nor ever called upon by that Community he belongs to; that is, I ſhould almoſt ſay, never to be regarded or minded, either by GOD or Man; yet ſtill ſuch a one did no Way live up to the Excellence of his Nature: His Buſineſs were not manly and rational, and his childiſh Life was therefore only pretty and pleaſing to him, becauſe he had a childiſh and ſilly Soul.

NOR is the Grave much better than the gay Impertinent; or the Man of Business, if he neglect the main, the one Thing necessary, to be preferred before the Man of Mode. Sensuality, it is true, softens, and Drudgery hardens the Mind; but both alike intoxicate it; both wed it to this, and alienate it from the other World. It imports very little to what Idol one sacrifice, whether *Asttaroth*, *Moloch*, or *Mammon*, if we sacrifice not to the true God. In vain do they pretend to any other Art, who are ignorant of the Art of Living: To plod or drudge, intrigue or trade, canvass and court, it is all but solemn Impertinence, if Virtue and Religion be neglected. Ah! what Phantoms, and Clouds, and Dreams do Men pursue, instead of Life and Peace, Rest and Pleasure!

Thirdly, REMISSNESS or Lukewarmness in Religion, a Sort of Neutrality between Vice and Virtue, is the next Thing to be avoided: We can never truly live, unless we be entirely uniform, unless we be wholly given up, and without Reserve, to the Conduct of Reason. There is little Pleasure in Religion, if there be no Fervency in it: It is Love makes the Duty easy, and the Prospect delightful. If there be no Strength in Faith, no Life in Devotion, no Spirit in Duty, no Desire in Hope, this is Religion without a Soul, it is the Carcase of an unanimated Virtue: What Peace, what Assurance, what Joy, what Transport, can ever be the Portion of such a Christian?

Fourthly, LEVITY and Inconstancy is the last Thing I will now mention, and the most irreconcilable Enemy to Life. For this does not only interrupt the Course of Life, or like Sleep or Sloth, make a vast Chasm in it, but puts us more back than we had advanced forward; an unhappy Gust
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of Wind that throws us off to Sea again, when we were almost come to Shore. If we will reap the Fruit of Victory, we must pursue it; if we will find Rest, we must be stedfast and immoveable; if we will enjoy Virtue, we must unite and incorporate it with us; it is impossible that the inconsistent, unstable Profelyte of Virtue should either have a pleasant Life, or a comfortable Death: For if he build To-day what he pulled down Yesterday, if he practise one Hour what he condemns another, it is impossible he should please himself, much less his God.

The End of the Second Part.



AN THE ENQUIRY

AFTER

HAPPINESS.

BY



RICHARD LUCAS, D.D.

PART III.



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THE INTRODUCTION.

BY what Steps I am advanced thus far in my Enquiry after Happiness, is obvious. First, I endeavour to remove those Objections which represent all Enquires and Attempts after true Happiness in this Life, either as fantastick or unnecessary, or, which is as bad, vain and to no Purpose: And after I have asserted the Value and Possibility of Happiness, I in general point out the true Reasons of our ill Success in Pursuit of it. In the Second Part, I state the true Notion of human Life, insist upon the several Kinds of it, and shew what Qualifications and Virtues the Active and Contemplative Life demand; and then consider how Life may be prolonged and improved. In this Third, I prosecute the same Design, which I had in the Two former; The promoting human Happiness. For Life, Perfection, and Happiness have a close and inseparable Dependance on one another. For as Life, which is the Rational Exercise and Employment of our Powers and Faculties, does naturally terminate in Perfection; so Perfection, which is nothing else but the Maturity of human Virtues, does naturally end in that Rest and Peace, that Tranquillity, Serenity, and Joy of Mind, which we call Happiness.

THE Method I observe in this Treatise is: In the First Section, I consider Perfection more more generally: In the Second, The several Parts of it; And in the Last, The Obstacles and Impediments of our attaining it. In the Two first Sections, I always first fix and explain the Notion of that State which I discourse of. Next I proceed to the Fruits or Advantages of it; and in the last Place prescribe the Method by which it may be attained.



A N

Enquiry after Happiness.

SCET I.

*Of Religious Perfection * in general.*

CHAP. I.

Perfection a confirmed Habit of Holiness.



RELIGION is nothing else but the purifying and refining Nature by Grace, the raising and exalting our Faculties and Capacities by Wisdom and Virtue. Religious Perfection, therefore, is nothing else but the moral Accomplishment of human Nature; such a Maturity of Virtue as Man in this Life is capable of. Conversion begins,

* It should be carefully observed, that by *Perfection* throughout this Treatise; is meant only Christian Holiness: And that Measure of it which is actually experienced by every young Man in CHRIST.

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Perfection consummates the Habit of Righteousness: In the one, Religion is, as it were, in its Infancy; in the other, in its Strength and Manhood; so that Perfection, in short, is nothing else but a ripe and settled Habit of true Holiness.

ACCORDING to this Notion of Perfection, he is a perfect Man whose Mind is pure and vigorous, and his Body tame and obsequious; whose Faith is firm and steady, his Love ardent and exalted, and his Hope full of Assurance; whose Religion has in it that Ardour and Constancy, and his Soul that Tranquility and Pleasure, which bespeaks him a Child of the Light, and of the Day, *a Partaker of the Divine Nature, and raised above the Corruption which is in the World thro' Lust.*

IN this Sense of the Word *Perfect*, St. Peter prays for those to whom he writes his Epistle, 1 Pet. v. 10. *But the God of all Grace, who called us into his eternal Glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.*

THE utmost Height to which the Scripture exhorts us, is a steady Habit of Holiness; the brightest Characters it gives of the perfect Man, the loveliest Descriptions it make us of the perfect State, are all made up of the natural and confessed Properties of a ripe Habit. There is no Controversy that I know of, about the Nature of a Habit; we are all agreed that it is a kind of second Nature, that it makes us exert ourselves with Desire and Earnestness, with Satisfaction and Pleasure; that it renders us fixed in our Choice, and constant in our Actions, and as averse to those Things which are repugnant to it, as we are to those which are distasteful to our Nature. And that,

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in a Word, it so entirely and absolutely possesses the Man, that the Power of it is not to be resisted, nor the Empire of it to be shaken off; nor can it be removed and extirpated without the greatest Labour. All this is a confessed Truth in the Habit of Sin; and there is no Reason why we should not ascribe the same Force and Efficacy to Habit of Virtue; especially if we consider that the Strength, Easiness, and Pleasure, which belong naturally to these Habits, receive no small Accession from the supernatural Energy and Vigour of the Holy Spirit. I will therefore in a few Words shew how that State of Righteousness which I term *Perfection*, answers this Account I have given of an Habit.

Is Habit in general a second Nature? This State of Righteousness is in Scripture called *the New Man*, Eph. iv. 24. *the Divine Nature*, 2 Pet. i. 4. Does it consequently rule and govern Man? Hear how St. Paul expresses this Power of the Habit of Holiness in himself, Gal. ii. 20. *I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the Life which I now live in the Flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* This is a constant Effect of Habits, and is equally discernable in those of Vice and Virtue, that they sway and govern the Man they possess; Rom. vi. 16. *Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves Servants to obey, his Servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of Sin unto Death, or of Obedience unto Righteousness?*

SHALL I go on to a more distinct Consideration of the Properties of an Habit? The *First* is, a great Aversion for those Things which are contrary to it, or obstructs us in the Exercise of it.

And this is directly the Disposition of the perfect Man towards Temptations and Sins: He is now ashamed of those Things which before he gloried in; he is filled with an holy Indignation against those Things which before he took Pleasure in; and that which before he courted with Fondness and Passion, he now shuns with Fear and Vigilance. In brief, the Scripture describes such an one as possessed with an utter Hatred and Abhorrence of every evil Way, and as an irreconcilable Enemy to every Thing that is an Enemy to his Virtue and his GOD. And how can this be otherwise? The Love of GOD must necessarily imply an Abhorrence of Evil; and that Habit which confirms and encreases the one, must confirm and encrease the other too.

2. THE next Property of an Habit is, that the Actions which flow from it are (if we meet not with violent Opposition) performed with Ease and Pleasure: What is natural, is pleasant and easy, and Habit is second Nature. When the Love of Virtue, and the Hatred of Vice have once rooted themselves in the Soul, what can be more natural than to follow after the one, and shun the other? Since this is no more than embracing and enjoying what we love, and turning our Backs on what we detest. This therefore is one constant Character of Perfection in Scripture: Delight and Pleasure are every where said to accompany the Practice of Virtue, when it is once grown up to Strength and Maturity: *The Ways of Wisdom are Ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace*, Prov. iii. 17. *Perfect Love casteth out Fear*, 1 John iv. 18. And to him that loves, *the Commandments of GOD are not grievous*, 1 John v. 3. Hence it is, that *the good Man's Delight is in the Law of the LORD*, and *that he meditates therein Day and Night*, Ps. i. 2.

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Nor does he delight less in Action than Meditation, but grows in Grace as much as Knowledge; and abounds daily more and more in good Works, as he encreases in the Comfort of the Holy Ghost.

3. VIGOUR and Activity, or much Earnestness and Application of Mind, is a third Property of an Habit. It is impossible not to be intent upon those Things for which we have even an habitual Passion, if this Expression may be allowed me; an Inclination which has gathered Strength and Authority from Custom; will exert itself with some Warmth and Briskness. Now certainly there is nothing more frequently required of, or attributed to the perfect Man in Scripture, than Zeal and Fervency of Spirit in the Ways of God; and no Wonder; for when Actions flow at once from Principles and Custom; when they spring from Love, and are attended by Pleasure, and are incited and quickened by Faith and Hope too; how can it be, but that we should repeat them with some Eagerness, and feel an holy Impatience as often as we are hindered or disappointed?

Lastly, Is Constancy and Steadiness the Property of an Habit? It is an undoubted Property of Perfection too. In Scripture good Men are every where represented as standing fast in the Faith; stedfast and immovable in the Works of God; holding fast their Integrity: In one Word, as constantly following after Righteousness, and maintaining a good Conscience towards God and Man. And so natural is this to one habitually good, that St. John affirms of such a one, that he cannot sin; 1 John iii. 9. Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit Sin, for his Seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

THUS I have cleared my Notion of Perfection from Scripture: Nor need I multiply more Texts, to prove what I think no Man can doubt of, unless he mistake the main Design of the Gospel; which is to exalt us to a steady Habit of Holiness: *The End of the Commandment, saith St. Paul, is Charity out of a pure Heart, and of a good Conscience, and of Faith unfeigned.* This is the utmost Perfection Man is capable of, to have his Mind enlightened, and his Heart purified; and to be informed, acted, and influenced by Faith and Love, as by a vital Principle: And all this is essential to habitual Goodness.

If any one desire further Light or Satisfaction in this Matter, let him read the eighth Chapter to the *Romans*, and he will soon acknowledge, that he there finds the Substance of what I have hitherto advanced. There, tho' the Word itself be not found, the Thing called Perfection is described in all the Strength and Beauty, in all the Pleasure and Advantages of it: There the Disciple of Jesus is represented as one *who walks not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit*; as one *whom the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus has set free from the Law of Sin and Death*; one who *is φρονις*, does not mind or relish the Things of the Flesh, but of the Spirit; one in whom the Spirit of Christ dwells: He does not stand at the Door, and knock; he does not make a transient Visit; but here he reigns, and rules, and inhabits: One finally, in whom the Body is dead because of Sin, but the Spirit is Life because of Righteousness. And the Result of this is the Joy and Confidence, the Security and Transport that become the Child of God. *Ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to Fear, but ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth Witness* with

with our Spirit, that we are the Children of GOD; and if Children, then Heirs, Heirs of GOD, and Joint-Heirs with Christ. And now it is no Wonder, if the perfect Man long for the Revelation of the Glory of the Sons of GOD; if he cry out in Rapture, *If GOD be for me, who can be against me? Who shall lay any Thing to the Charge of GOD's Elect? Who shall separate me from the Love of Christ?* If any one would see the perfect Man described in fewer Words, he needs but cast his Eye on Rom. vi. 22. *But now being made free from Sin, and become Servants to GOD, ye have your Fruit unto Holiness, and the End everlasting Life.*



CHAP. II.

Inferences deduced from the true Notion of Perfection.

HAVING fixed the Notion of Perfection, and and proved it consonant to Scripture, I have nothing now to do, but by Way of Inference to represent the Advantages we may reap from it.

1. IT is from hence plain, that Perfection must not be placed in fantastick Speculations or voluntary Observances, but in the solid and useful Virtues of the Gospel; in the Works of Faith, the Labour of Love, and the Patience of Hope; in the Purity and Humility of a Child of Light; in the Constancy and Magnanimity which become one who has brought the Body into Subjection,

and has set his Affections on Things above. This State of Perfection is well enough described by the Rule of St. Bennet. *Ergo his omnibus Humilitatis Gradibus ascensis, Monachus mox ad Charitatem, &c.* The Monk having passed thro' these several Stages of Humility or Mortification, will arrive at that Love of GOD which casteth out Fear; by which he will be enabled to perform all Things with Ease and Pleasure, and, as it were, naturally, which before he performed with Reluctancy and Dread; being now moved and acted, not by the Terrors of Hell, but by a Delight in Goodness, and the Force of an excellent Habit: Both which Christ by his Spirit vouchsafes to increase and exalt in his Servants now cleansed and purged from all Sin and Vice.

2. THIS Notion of Perfection proves all Men to lie under an Obligation: For as all are capable of an Habit of Holiness, so is it the Duty of all to endeavour after it. If Perfection were indeed an angelical State; if it did consist in an Exemption from all Defects and Infirmities, and in such an Elevation of Virtue, to which nothing can be added, then I confess, all Discourses of it, and much more all Attempts after it, would be vain.

BUT if Christian Perfection be only a well confirmed Habit in Goodness, if it differ from Sincerity only, when Sincerity is in its Weakness and Infancy, not when grown up, then it is plain, that every Christian lies under an Obligation to it. Accordingly the Scripture exhorts all to perfect Holiness in the Fear of GOD, to go on to Perfection, Heb. vi. and it assigns this as one great End of the Institution of a Ministry in the Churches of Christ, namely, the perfecting the Saints, the edifying the Body of Christ; 'till we all come to the Unity of

of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the Measure of the Fulness of Christ, Eph. iv. 12, 13. And hence it is, that we find the Apostles pursuing this great End, by their Prayers and Labours, earnestly contending and endeavouring to present all Christians perfect before God, 1 Thes. iii. 10. Night and Day praying exceedingly, that we might see your Face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your Faith: Col. i. 28. Whom we preach, warning every Man, and teaching every Man in all Wisdom, that we may present every Man perfect in Christ Jesus.

3. IT is very easy to discern now where we stand in Reference to Perfection; how remote we are from it, or how near to it. And because this is a Matter of no small Importance, and Men are generally backward to advance into such Reflections as may breed any Disturbance to their Peace or any Diminution of their good Opinion for themselves, I shall endeavour by several particular Deductions, to lay every Man's State as plainly open to View as I can.

1. THEN, from the Notion I have given of Perfection, it appears, that if a Man's Life be very uneven, inconstant, and contradictory to itself; if he yield to Day to the Motives of the Gospel, and Impulses of the Spirit, and to morrow to the Sollicitations of the Flesh, and Temptations of the World, he is far from being Perfect; so far that there is not Ground enough to conclude him a sincere or real, tho' imperfect Convert. The only certain Proof of Regeneration is Victory; *he that is born of God, overcometh the World, 1 John v.*

4. Faith is not saving and justifying unless it subdue the Will, and captivate the Heart. We may have sudden Heats and Passions for Virtue; but if they be too short lived to implant it in us, this

is not that Love which animates and impregnates a Christian: It is not *Faith working by Love*. Lastly, we may have good Purposes, Intentions, nay, Resolutions; but if these prove too weak to obtain a Conquest over our Corruptions, if they prove too weak to resist the Temptations we are wont to fall by, it is plain they are not such as can demonstrate us Righteous, or entitle us to a Crown, which is promised to him that overcometh. Here I think it is well worth considering whether that great Change in the Nature of a Sinner which is called Holiness, be now effected at once, and in a Moment or not.

It is certain in the primitive Times, when the Conviction of a Sinner was wrought by a dazzling Light, and by exuberant Influxes of the Spirit, Sanctification (as in the Goaler and his Family, *Acts* 16.) might be wrought in one Hour. But I doubt it is rarely so with us at this Day; * our Convictions in the Beginning of Conversion, are seldom so full and clear as theirs: And, if we may judge by the Effects, it is but seldom that the Principle of a new Life is infused in the same Power it appears to have been in them. And if so, then these Things will follow; 1. Though in the first Plantation of the Gospel, Men being converted, as it were in a Moment, ingrafted into *Christ*, and receiving the Holy Ghost, the Earnest of their Justification or Acceptance with God, and their future Glory: We may very well say of them, that they were not only Justified, but also knew themselves to be so, before they had brought forth any other Fruit of Righteousness, than what was implied in the Dedication of themselves to *Christ* by that solemn Rite of Baptism; but at this Day Con-

* Yes it is: As may be proved by a thousand Instances.

version is not effected in the same Manner; † Righteousness is not brought forth into Victory, but by long Labour. 2. The Doctrine of infused Habits has been much ridiculed as absurd; and I must confess, if it be Essential to a Habit, to be acquired by Length of Time, and Repetition of the same Acts, then an infused Habit is a very odd Expression: But why GOD cannot produce in us those strong Dispositions to Virtue in a Moment, which are naturally produced by Time; or why we may not ascribe as much Efficacy to infused Grace, as Philosophers are wont to do to repeated Acts, I cannot see? Nor can I see why such Dispositions, when infused may not be called Habits, if they have all the Properties and Effects of an Habit. And that such excellent Dispositions were on a sudden wrought in the Minds of Christians in the Beginning of Christianity, is too plain from the History of those Times to need a Proof.

2dly, He that feels in himself little or no Fervency of Spirit, little or no Hunger and Thirst after Righteousness, has Reason to doubt, lest his Religion be nothing else but Custom or common Prudence. I see not how so much Indifference and Sluggishness can consist with a sincere Love of GOD: And the best Advice that can be given such a one, is surely that of St. Peter, that by adding one Degree of Virtue to another, he would use all Diligence to make his Calling and Election sure, 2 Pet. i. 10.

3dly, If a Man's Religion produce very few good Works, or such only as put him to little Travel or Expence, we may conclude that this

† Indeed it is.

Man is not perfect; his Charity is too weak, too narrow to be that of a real Christian: This Remark, that the Inconsiderableness of our good Works is Reason enough to question, not only one's Perfection, but Sincerity holds good in such Cases only, where neither the Opportunity nor Capacity of higher and nobler Performances is wanting. I dare not pronounce, that no Man can be a Christian, unless he be fit to be a Martyr: It is true, the lowest Degree of Sincerity must imply universal Obedience, in Defiance of all Temptations; but yet that Grace, may be sufficient to save a Man, that is sufficient to master the Difficulties he is to encounter with, altho' he should not be able to grapple with the Tryals to which another Man may be subject. Surely the Wisdom and the Faithfulness of GOD can be no further concerned, than to qualify any one for the Discharge of those Duties which he thinks fit to call him to: And if the Discharge of such Duties be not a sufficient Proof of our Sincerity, we can never have any, but must be always held in Suspence about our future State.

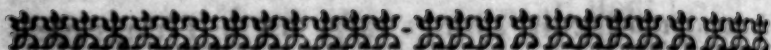
4thly, If the Duties of Religion be very troublesome and uneasy to a Man, we may from hence conclude, that he is not perfect: For though the Beginning of Wisdom and Virtue be generally harsh and severe to the Fool and Sinner, yet to him that has conquered, *The Yoke of Christ is easy, and his Burthen light; to him that is filled with the Love of GOD, his Commandments are not grievous;* hence is the Observation of the Son of Sirach, Ec. iv. 17, 18. *For at the first she will walk with him, by crooked Ways, and bring Fear and Dread upon him, and torment him with her Discipline, until she may trust his Soul, and try him by her Laws; then will she return the straight Way unto him, and comfort him,*

him, and shew him her Secrets. The Reason of this Assertion is palpable; it is the Nature of an Habit to render difficult Things easy, harsh Things pleasant, to fix a floating and uncertain Humour, to nurse and ripen a weak and tender Disposition into Nature. And it is as reasonable to expect these Effects in religious, as in any other Sorts of Habits.

Lastly, HE who does not find Religion full of Pleasure, who does not glory in GOD, and rejoice in our LORD JESUS, he who is not filled with an humble Assurance of the Divine Favour, and a Joyful Expectation of Immortality and Glory, does yet want something; he is yet defective, with Respect either to the Brightness of Illumination, the Absoluteness of Liberty, or the Ardour of Love; he may be a good Man, and have gone a great Way in his Christian Race; but there is something still behind to compleat and perfect him; some Error or other creates him groundless Scruples, some Incumbrance or Impediment or other; whether an Infelicity of Temper, or too warm an Application to something of the World, retards his Vigour, and abates his Affections.

THE next Thing I am to do, according to the Method I have proposed, is, to consider the Fruits and Advantages of Perfection. A Consideration which will furnish us with many Motives to it; and demonstrate its Subserviency to our Happiness.





C H A P. III.

A general Account of the Blessed Fruits and Advantages of religious Perfection.

I BEGIN with Assurance; which may relate to the Time present or to come: For the Resolution of two Questions, gives the Mind a perfect Ease about this Matter. The first is, Am I assured that I am at present in a State of Grace? The second, Am I assured that I shall continue so to my Life's End? To begin with the first: The Answer of this Enquiry depends on three Grounds; *

First, A DIVINE Revelation, which declares in general, who shall be saved; namely, They who Repent and Believe. Heaven lies open to all that perform these Conditions; every Page of the Gospel attests this; this is the Substance of *Christ's* Commission to his Apostles that they should preach Repentance and Remission of Sins through his Name amongst all Nations.

THE *Second* Ground of Assurance, as it relates to our present State, is an Application of the Conditions of Life laid down in the Gospel to a Man's

N.B. * The Primary Assurance, that we are now in a State of Favour with God, arises from the Direct Witness of his Spirit. This Secondary Kind of Assurance, may and ought to follow.

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own particular Case, thus; *They that repent and believe shall be saved*; I repent and believe, therefore I shall be saved. Now that a Man upon an Examination of himself, may be thoroughly assured that he does repent and believe, is evident from Scripture, which does not only exhort us to enter upon this Examination, but also asserts, that Assurance, Joy, and Peace, are the natural Fruits of it: *Examine yourselves whether you be in the Faith; prove your own selves: Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be Reprobates?* 2 Cor. xv. 5. *But sanctify the LORD GOD in your Hearts; and be ready always to give an Answer to every Man that asketh you a Reason of the Hope that is in you, with Meekness and Fear,* 1 Pet. iii. 13. *And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep his Commandments,* 1 John ii. 3. It is true, Men often deceive themselves, and entertain a more favourable Opinion of their State than they ought. But whence proceeds this? Even from too partial or superficial Reflections on themselves, or none at all. And therefore the Apostle teaches us plainly, that the only Way to correct this Error, is a sincere and diligent Search into ourselves: *For if a Man think himself to be Something when he is Nothing, he deceiveth himself: But let every Man prove his own Work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another,* Gal. vi. 34.

AND then a sincere Christian, may easily discern his spiritual State by the inward Movings and Actings of the Soul: For is it possible that such a one should be ignorant, what Impressions Divine Truths make upon him? Is it possible he should be ignorant, whether his Faith stands firm against the Shock of all carnal Objections; whether he

earnestly desire to please God, as loving Him above all Things; whether he thirst after the Consolation and Joy of the Spirit, more than after that of sensible Things? Is it possible that the Soul should be carried upwards frequently on the Wings of Faith and Love, that it should maintain a familiar Conversation with Heaven, that it should long to be delivered from this World of Trouble, and this Body of Death, and to enter into the Regions of Peace, of Life, and Righteousness? Is it possible, I say, that these should be the Affections, the Longings and Yearnings of the Soul, and yet that he who often enters into his Closet, and communes with his own Heart, should be ignorant of them? It cannot be. In a Word, can the Reluctances of the Body, and the Alurements of the World, be disarmed, weakened, and reduced? Can the Hunger and Thirst after Righteousness be eager, the Relish of spiritual Pleasure brisk and delightful, and Contempt of worldly Things really and thoroughly settled, and yet the Man be insensible of all this? It cannot be. But if we feel these Affections in us, we may safely conclude, that we are Partakers of the Divine Nature; that *we have escaped the Corruption that is in the World thro' Lust*; and that *we are growing up into a perfect Man, to the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ*.

ONE would think, there should be nothing further needful to establish the Consolation of a Christian; and yet God out of Regard, no Doubt, to the vast Importance and happy Influence of Assurance, has furnished us with another Ground of it, which is,

THE Testimony * of the Spirit. This Spirit,

* This does accompany our Self-Examination; but precedes it likewise.

as it assists us in our Examination, so it ratifies and confirms our Sentence by its Suffrage, fortifying our Assurance, and increasing our Joy. All this the Scripture expressly teaches us; for the Spirit is called, *The Earnest of our Inheritance, the Seal of our Redemption*, Eph. i. 13, 14. Eph. iv. 30, 31. 2 Cor. ii. 10. 2 Cor. v. 1. And if it were supposed that these Places relate more immediately to the Spirit of Promise which was conspicuous in Miracles; yet there are Texts enough which assure us, that the Spirit of God should be imparted to Believers through all succeeding Ages, and that this should be one Effect of it to comfort us, and be a Pledge to us of the Divine Favour: Thus, Rom. xv. 13. *Now the GOD of Hope fill you with all Joy and Peace in Believing, that ye may abound in Hope through the Power of the Holy Ghost.* And Rom. viii. 15, 16. *For ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father; the Spirit itself beareth Witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of GOD; and if Children, then Heirs, Heirs of GOD, and Joint-heirs with Christ.* If it be here demanded what this Testimony of the Spirit is: I answer, it is a powerful Energy of the blessed Spirit, first witnessing GOD's Love to us, and then shedding abroad and increasing the Love of GOD in our Hearts. This is the Spirit of Adoption, the Spirit of Obligation, the Spirit of Glory, and the Spirit of Love; happy is he who is Partaker of it.

2. ASSURANCE may regard the Time to come; and it conduces very little less to the Peace and Pleasure of a Christian to be assured that he shall persevere in a good State, than that he is now in one. Let us therefore in the next Place examine

what Grounds the perfect Man may have for such a Persuasion: Now these are likewise three.

FIRST, *The Favour of GOD for the perfect Man.*

SECONDLY, *The Sufficiency of Divine Assistance.*
And,

THIRDLY, *The Conscience of his own Integrity.*

FIRST, *The Favour of GOD.* I need not go about to prove that GOD's Eyes are always upon the Righteous, and his Ears always open to their Prayers: That they are the dear Objects of his Delight and Love: Reason and Scripture both abundantly attest this, and the repeated Promises of GOD to good Men encourage them to hope from GOD whatever beloved Children may from tender and kind Father. Is not this enough then to inspire the perfect Man with great and confident Hopes? He knows, not only, that GOD is an immutable GOD, free from all Levity and Inconstancy; and therefore, that nothing less than Presumption and Obstinacy, habitual Neglect, or Wickedness, can tempt Him to recall his Gifts, or repent Him of his Favours: He knows not only that GOD is faithful, and will not suffer him to be tempted above what he is able; but he knows also, that he has a powerful Intercessor at the Right-hand of GOD, an Advocate with the Father, who cannot but prevail. Nor is this all yet: He has a great many Things that plead for Him with GOD: There are his Tears which are bottled up; there are his Prayers and Alms which are gone up for a Memorial before GOD; there is a Book of Remembrance written, wherein all his pious Discourses are registred; and GOD is faithful, and cannot forget his Works
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and Labour of Love. The Spirit of God will not soon quit the Bosom that it so long resided in ; it will not suffer itself to be divided from that Person with whom it had entred into so close an Union, that it seemed as it were incorporated with Him, and become essential to his Being : Whence it is that the Spirit is said to be grieved when He is forced and compelled to retire.

SECONDLY, *The second Ground of Assurance for the Time to come, is the Sufficiency of Divine Assistance.* The good Man is well assured, that God will never refuse the Protection of his Providence, or the Aid of his Spirit : And what can be too difficult for such a one ? Providence can prevent a Temptation, or remove it ; the Spirit can support Him under it, and enable Him to vanquish it ; nay, it can enable him to extract new Strength and Vigour from it ; *my Grace is sufficient for thee,* 2 Cor. xii. 9. the Truth of which Assertion has been illustriously proved by the Victories of Martyrs and Confessors, who triumphed over the united Force of Men and Devils. Though then the Conscience of human Frailty may awaken in the best of Men Fear and Caution, the Assurance of Divine Assistance cannot but beget in them an holy Confidence.

THIRDLY, *The Conscience of his own Integrity is a third Ground of a good Man's Confidence.* He knows that nothing but crying Provocations can quench the Spirit, and oblige God to desert him ; and he has Reason to Hope, that this is that he cannot be guilty of. He is sure, that presumptuous Wickedness is not only repugnant to his Principles, but to the very Bent of his Nature, to all the Inclinations and Passions of his Soul : Can he

ever wilfully dishonour and disobey God, who loves him above all Things? Can he forsake, and betray his Saviour, who has long rejoiced and gloried in Him; who has been long accustomed to look upon all the Satisfactions of this Life, as Dung and Dross in Comparison of Him? Can he, in one Word, ever be seduced to renounce and hate Religion, who has had so long an Experience of the Beauty, and of the Pleasure of it? Good Habits when they are grown up to Maturity, seem to me as natural as evil ones: And if so, it is no less difficult to extirpate the one than the other. And I think I have the Scripture on my Side in this Opinion: Does the Prophet *Jeremy* demand, *Can the Ethiopian change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots? Then may you that are accustomed to do Evil, learn to do well,* Jer. xiii. 23. St. *John* on the other Hand does affirm, *Whoever is born of God, doth not commit Sin; for his Seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of GOD,* 1 John iii. 9. *Whoever abideth in Him, sinneth not,* v. 6.

HERE we have Room enough for Joy and Peace and for Caution too; Room enough for Confidence, and for Watchfulness too: The *Romanists* indeed, will not allow us to be certain of Salvation, with such a Certainty as that with which we entertain an Article of Faith; *i. e.* we are not so sure that we are in the Favour of God, as we are, that there is a God. We are not so sure, that we have a Title to the Merits of *Christ*, as we are, or may be, that *Jesus* is the *Christ*. Now if this Assertion be confined to that Assurance which regards the Time to come, there is nothing very absurd or intolerable in it. For a less Assurance than that which this Doctrine excludes, will be sufficient to secure the Pleasure and Tranquility of the perfect Man.

Man. But if it be designed against that Assurance which regards our present State, then it is not agreeable either to Reason, Scripture, or Experience. For,

First, THE Question being about a Matter of Fact, it is in vain to argue that cannot be, which does appear manifestly to have been: And certainly they who rejoiced in *Christ* with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory, were as fully persuaded, that they were in a State of Grace and Salvation, as they were that *Jesus* was risen from the Dead.

Secondly, IT is one Thing to ballance the Strength and Degrees of Assurance; another to ballance the Reasons of it. For it is very possible that Assurance may be stronger, where the Reason of it may not be so clear as where the Assurance is less. Thus for Example; the Evidence of Sense seems to many learned Men to be stronger than that of Faith: And yet through the Assistance of the Spirit, a Man may embrace a Truth that depends upon Revelation, with as much Confidence and Certainty as one depending upon Sense. And so it may be in the Case of Assurance: The Spirit of God may by its Concurrence raise our Assurance as high as He pleases.

BUT *Thirdly*, Why should not the Certainty I have concerning my present State, be as divine and infallible, as that I have concerning an Article of Faith? If the Premises be infallible, why should not the Conclusion? He that *repents and believes* is in a State of Grace, is a divine, an infallible Proposition: And why may not this other, *I repent and believe*, be equally infallible, though not equally divine? What Repentance and Faith is, is revealed; and therefore there is no Room for my
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being here mistaken: Besides, I am assisted and guided in the Trial of myself by the Spirit of God. So that the Truth of this Proposition, *I repent and believe*, depends partly upon the Evidence of Sense; and I may be as sure of it, as of what I do, or leave undone: Partly upon the Evidence of inward Sensation, or my Consciousness of my own Thoughts; and I may be as sure of it, as I can be of what I love or hate, rejoice or grieve for:

AND *Lastly*, It depends upon the Evidence of the Spirit of God, which assists me in the Examination of myself. And when I conclude from the former Propositions, that I am in a State of Grace, he confirms and ratifies my Inference. And now, let any one tell me, what Kind of Certainty that is, that can be greater than this? I have taken this Pains to set the Doctrine of Assurance in a clear Light, because it is the great Spring of the perfect Man's Comfort and Pleasure, the Source of his Strength and Joy. And this puts me in Mind of that other Fruit of Perfection.

ITS Subserviency to our Happiness in this Life.

THAT Happiness increases in Proportion with Perfection, cannot be denied, unless we will at the same Time deny the Happiness of a Man, to exceed that of an Infant, or the Happiness of an Angel that of a Man. Now this Truth being of great Importance, and serving singly instead of a thousand Motives to Perfection, I will consider it closely. Happiness and Pleasure, are generally thought to be only two Words for the same Thing: Nor is this very remote from Truth; for let but Pleasure be solid and lasting, and what more is wanting to make Man happy? The best Way therefore, to determine how much Perfection con-
tributes

tributes to our Happiness, is to examine how much it contributes to our Pleasure.

IF with the *Epicurean*, we think Indolence our supreme Happiness, and define Pleasure by the Absence of Pain, then I am sure the perfect Man will have the best Claim to it. He surely is freest from the Mistakes and Errors, from the Passions and Follies, that embroil human Life: He creates no Evil to himself, nor provokes any unnecessary Danger. His Virtue effectually does that which Atheism attempts in vain; dispels the Terror of an invisible Power: He need not drown the Voice of Conscience by Wine, or Noise, or the Toil of Life: It speaks nothing to him, but what is kind and obliging; it is his Comforter, not his Persecutor: And as to this World, he reaps that Satisfaction and Tranquility from the Moderation of his Affections, which Ambition and Avarice in vain promise themselves from Preferments, or the Increase of Wealth. If therefore there were any State on this Side Heaven exempt from Evil, it must be that of the perfect Man. But he knows the World too well to flatter himself with the Expectation of Indolence, or an undisturbed Tranquility here below; and is as far from being deluded by vain Hopes, as from being scared by vain Fears, or tortured by vain Desires. He knows the World has its Evils, and that they cannot wholly be avoided; he knows it, and dares behold them with open Eyes, survey their Force, and feel and try their Edge. And when he has called in the Aid of Heaven, he shrinks not nor desponds; but meets Evil with that Courage, and bears it with that Evenness of Mind, that he seems, even in his Afflictions, nearer to Indolence, than the Fool and Sinner in his Prosperity. So that there appears so much Loveliness in the Deportment of the perfect Man,

Man, with Respect to the Evils of Life, that for that Reason alone, were there no other, I should prefer his Virtue above any Possession or Enjoyment of Life. Give me Leave to compare the Saint and the Sinner on this Occasion; and but very briefly: *The wise Man's Eyes*, saith Solomon, *Eccles. ii. 14. are in his Head; but the Fool walketh in Darknefs.* The wise Man sees that he has Enemies, I mean Evils; and therefore he informs himself well of their Strength, observes their Motion, and prepares for the Encounter: But Stupidity, is the greatest Blessing of the Sinner's Life; and his most admired Quality is not to be apprehensive of Evil, 'till it crush him with its Weight. If the Sinner be not Fool enough to arrive at this Degree of Brutality, then as soon as the Report of the most distant Evil, or the most inconsiderable, reaches his Ear, how it fills his Imagination, how it shakes his Heart, and how it embitters his Pleasures! And to what poor and despicable Arts, to what base and dishonourable Shifts does his Fear force him? When on the same Occasion we discover nothing in the perfect Man, but a beautiful Mixture of Humility and Faith, Devotion and Confidence, or Assurance in GOD: *He is not afraid of evil Tidings; his Heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD; Psalm cxii.* a Frame of Spirit, which to those who have Opportunity and Sense to observe it, renders him both more belov'd and rever'd.

Lastly, If we consider the wicked and the good Man, actually under the Pressure of Evil, how much unlike is the State of the one, to that of the other, even while the outward Circumstances are the same? What Chearfulness, what Courage, what Resignation, what Hopes adorn the one! What Instruction to all, what Satisfaction to his Friends and Relations does his Deportment afford!

And

And how does it warm the Breasts of those that converse with him, with an Esteem for, and Love of Goodness, and himself! What Charm, what Delight is there in those gracious Speeches, that proceed at this Time out of a good Man's Mouth! *I know that my Redeemer liveth: The LORD giveth, and the LORD taketh away; blessed be the Name of the LORD: Thou of very Faithfulness hast caused me to be afflicted: GOD is the Strength of my Heart, and my Portion for ever.* And how often does he pour out his Heart in secret before GOD! How often does he reflect on the gracious and wise Ends of Divine Chastisement! And how often does he, with Desire and Thirst, meditate on that Fulness of Joy which expects him in the Presence of GOD! But let us cast our Eye on the Voluptuary, on the Ambitious, on the Covetous, or any other Sort of Sinner, under Disgrace, Poverty, Sicknes, or any such Calamity; what a mean and despicable Figure does he make! What Impatience, what Despondency, what Guilt, what Pusillanimity does every Word, every Action betray! Or it may be, his Insolence is turned into Crouching and Fawning; his Rudeness and Violence into Artifice and Cunning; and his Irreligion into Superstition. Various indeed are the Humours, and very different the Carriage of these unhappy Men in the Day of Trial; but all is but Misery in a different Dress, Guilt and Baseness under a different Appearance. Here I might further remark, that *that* Faith which produces Patience in Adversity, produces likewise Confidence in Prosperity. *I will lay me down (may every good Man say) and sleep, and rise again; for Thou, LORD, shalt make me dwell in Safety.* And surely the one is as serviceable to the Ease of human Life as the other. But I think I have said enough to shew, that if Pleasure be supposed to imply no
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more than Indolence, the perfect Man has without Controversy a far greater Share of it than any other.

BUT let us take Pleasure to be, not a mere Calm, but a gentle Breeze; not mere Rest and Quiet, but a delightful Motion; not the mere Tranquility of the Mind, but the Transport of it, or something nearly approaching it. Perfection will suffer nothing by this Change of the Notion of Pleasure. How many Pleasures has the wise Man, which depend not on Fortune, to which the Sinner is an utter Stranger! What Pleasure, what Triumph is equal to that of the perfect Man, when he glories in GOD, and makes his Boast of Him? When he *rejoices in the LORD with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory*? When being transported by a vital Sense of Divine Love, and strengthened and exalted by the mighty Energy of the Spirit of Adoption, he maintains a *Fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus*? All Communion with GOD, consists in this Joy of Love and Assurance, and has a Taste of Heaven in it. Let the most fortunate, and the wisest Epicurean too, ransack all the Storehouses and Treasures of Nature; let him muster together all his Legions of Pleasure, and let him, if he can, consolidate and incorporate them all; and after all, being put into the Scale against this alone, they will prove lighter than Vanity itself. To be the Care, the Delight, the Love of an Almighty GOD; to be dear to Him, who is the Origin and Fountain of all Perfections. LORD! what Rest, what Confidence, what Joy, what Extasy do these Thoughts breed! How sublime, how lofty, how delightful and ravishing are those Expressions of St. John! *1 John iii. 1, 2. Behold, what Manner of Love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called*
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the Sons of GOD ! therefore the World knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the Sons of GOD, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be ; but we know, that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. But I will descend to cooler and humbler Pleasures. It is no small Happiness to the perfect Man, that he can reflect on the Truth and Justice, the Courage and Constancy, the Meekness and Charity of his Soul, with much Gratitude towards GOD, and Contentment in himself. Nor is it a Matter of small Importance : For grant any one but this, and he can never be very uneasy, or very miserable. But without this, there are very few Things which will not disturb and discompose ; and the most obliging Accidents of Life will have no Relish in them. It is true, Folly and Vanity does sometimes create a Self-Complacency in the Sinner ; why, even then, it is pleasing Error. But there is as much Difference between the just and the rational Complacency of a wise Man in himself, and the mistaken one of a Fool, as there is between the false and fleeting Fancies of a Dream, and the solid Satisfactions of the Day. This will be very manifest upon the slightest View we can take of those Actions, which are the true Reason of the good Man's Satisfaction, and render his Conscience a continual Feast to him.

It is commonly said, -- *Virtue is its own Reward* : And tho' it must be acknowledged, this is a Reward which is not sufficient in all Cases, nor great enough to vanquish some Sorts of Temptations ; yet there is a great deal of Truth and Weight in this Saying. For a State of Virtue is like a State of Health or Peace, of Strength and Beauty ; and therefore desirable on its own Account. And if

Pleasure, properly speaking, be nothing else but the agreeable Exercise of the Powers of Nature about their proper Objects; and if it be then compleat, when these Powers are raised, and the Exercise of them is free and undisturbed, then certainly Virtue, which is nothing else but the perfect Action of a perfect Nature, as far as the one and the other may be admitted in this State of Mortality, must be a very considerable Pleasure. Acts of Wisdom and Charity, the Contemplation of Truth, and the Love of Goodness, must be the most natural and delightful Exercise of the Mind. Indeed, how many, how various are the Exercises and Employments of the Mind of Man! And when it is once polished and cultivated, how agreeable are they! To find out, to illustrate and adorn, to prove and demonstrate, to weigh and distinguish, to deliberate calmly and impartially, to act with an absolute Liberty, to despise little Things, and look boldly on Dangers; to do all Things dextrously, to converse with a sweet and yet manly Air, in honest and open, yet taking, obliging Language! How delightful are these Things in themselves! How much do they conduce to the Service, the Beauty, and Dignity of human Life! To these accomplished Minds we owe Histories, Sciences, Arts, Trades, Laws. From all which, if others reap an unspeakable Pleasure, how much more the Authors, the Parents of them? And all this puts me in Mind of one great Advantage which the perfect Man enjoys above the most fortunate Sensualist; which is, that he can never want an Opportunity to employ all the Vigour of his Mind, usefully and delightfully. Whence it is that Retirement, which is the Prison and the Punishment of the Fool, is the Paradise of the Wise and Good.

BUT

BUT let us come at length to that Pleasure which depends upon external Objects; where, if any where, the Fool and Sinner must dispute his Title to Pleasure with the Wise and Good. Yet how many Things are there here which force us to give the Preference to the wise Man? I will not urge, that a narrow, a private Fortune can furnish Store enough for all the Appetites of Virtue; that a wise Man need not at any Time purchase his Pleasure at too dear a Rate; he need not lie, nor cheat, nor crouch, nor fawn: This is the Price of sinful Pleasure. I will not, I say, urge these and the like Advantages, since the World thinks it Want of Spirit to be content with a little; and Want of Wit not to practise those Arts, let them be never so base, by which we may compass more. I will only remark these few Things:

First, THE wise Man's Prospect is enlarged. He is like an Artist or Philosopher, who discovers a thousand Beauties in a Piece, wherein the Idiot can see none: He sees in all the Works, in all the Providences of GOD, those Depths, those Contrivances, which the Fool cannot fathom; that Order, that Harmony, which the Sinner is insensible of.

Secondly, THE Pleasure of Sense, that is not refined by Virtue, leaves a Stain upon the Mind; it is coarse and turbulent, empty and vexatious. The Pleasure of Virtue is like a Stream, which runs indeed within its Banks, but it runs smooth and clear, and always feeds the Current: But the Pleasure of Sin is like a Land-flood, impetuous, muddy, and irregular; and as soon as it forsakes the Ground it overflow'd, it leaves nothing behind it but Slime and Filth.

Lastly, THE wise Man forming a true Estimate of the Objects of Sense, and not looking upon them as his ultimate End, enjoys all that is in them, and is not fooled by an Expectation of more.

THUS having considered the Objects of human Pleasure, two Things are plain: *First*, That the perfect Man has many Sources of Pleasure, which the Sinner never tastes of, which he cannot relish, which he is a Stranger to: *Next*, As to outward Things, that he has even here many Advantages above the other. But what is more considerable yet, is

ALL the Claim the Sinner lays to Pleasure, is confined to the present Moment, which is extremely short, and extremely uncertain; the Time that is past and to come he quits all Pretension to, or ought to do so. As to the Time past, the Thing is self-evident; for the Sinner, looking back, sees his Pleasures and Satisfaction, the good Man his Trials and Temptations past and gone: The Sinner sees an End of his Beauty and his Strength; the good Man of his Weaknesses and Follies: The one when he looks back is encounter'd with Sin and Folly, Wickedness and Shame; the other with Repentance and good Works: Guilt and Fear haunt the Reflections of the one, Peace and Hope attend those of the other. As to the Time to come, the Atheist hath no Prospect at all beyond the Grave, the wicked Christian a very dismal one, the Weak and Imperfect a doubtful one; only the Wise and Perfect an assured, joyful, and delightful one. And this puts me in Mind of that which is the proper Fruit of Perfection, and the truest and greatest Pleasure of human Life, that is, Assurance; Assurance of the Pardon of Sin, Af-

surance

urance of the Divine Favour, Assurance of Immortality and Glory.

NEED I prove, that Assurance is an unspeakable Pleasure? One would think, that to Man, who is daily engaged in a Conflict with some Evil or other, it were superfluous to prove that it is a mighty Pleasure to be raised, tho' not above the Assault, yet above the Venom and Malignity of Evils: To be filled with Joy, and Strength, and Confidence; to ride triumphant under the Protection of the Divine Favour, and see the Sea of Life swell and toss itself in vain, in vain threaten the Bark it cannot sink, in vain invade the Cable it cannot burst. One would think, that to Man, who lives all his Life long in Bondage for Fear of Death, it should be a surprising Delight to see Death lie gasping at his Feet, naked and impotent, without Sting, without Terror: One would finally think, that to Man, who lives rather by Hope than Enjoyment, it should not be necessary to prove, that the Christian's Hope, whose Confidence is greater, its Objects more glorious, and its Success more certain than that of any worldly Pleasure; and that it is a delightful Prospect to see the Heavens opened, and *Jesus*, our *Jesus*, our Prince and Saviour, sitting at the Right-Hand of God.

THUS I have, I think, sufficiently made out the Subserviency of Perfection to the Happiness of this present Life. Nor can I imagine what Objections can be sprung to invalidate what I have said, unless there be any Thing of Colour in these two.

1. To reap the Pleasure, will some one say, which you have described here, it requires something

thing of an exalted Genius, some Compass of Understanding, some Sagacity and Penetration. To this I answer, I grant indeed that some of those Pleasures which I have reckoned up as belonging to the perfect Man, demand a Spirit raised a little above the Vulgar: But the richest Pleasures, not the most polished and elevated Spirits, but the most devout and charitable Souls are best capable of. Such are the Peace and Tranquility which arises from the Conquest of all inordinate Affections; the Satisfaction which accompanies a sincere and vigorous Discharge of Duty, and our Reflections upon it; the Security and Rest which flows from Self-resignation, and Confidence in the Divine Protection: And lastly, the Joy that springs from the full Assurance of Hope.

BUT 2dly, it may be objected, It is true all these Things seem to hang together well enough in Speculation; but when we come to examine the Matter of Fact, all you have said to prove the *Ways of Wisdom, Ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths Peace*, amounts to no more than a pretty Amusement of the Mind, and a visionary Scheme of Happiness. For how few are there who feel all this to be Truth, and experience the Pleasure you talk of? How few are there in whom we can discover any Signs of this spiritual Joy, or Fruits of a Divine Tranquility or Security? I answer, in a Word, the Examples of mature Virtue are very few; Religion runs very low, and the Love of God and Goodness in the Bosoms of most Christians, suffers such an Alloy and Mixture, that it is no Wonder at all, if so imperfect a State breed but very imperfect Hopes, faint and doubtful Joys. But I shall have Occasion to examine the Force of this Objection more fully, when I come to the Obstacles of Perfection.

3dly, It may be objected against the Account I have given of the Growth of Virtue, that when I come to the Maturity of it, my Colours are too bright, my Strokes too bold, and the Form I have given it too divine. For you describe it, will one say, as if Man, now grown perfect, had nothing to do but to enjoy GOD and himself; as if he were already entered into Rest; as if he had nothing to do but to rejoice continually, nothing further to press after, nothing to combat, nothing to contend with: Whereas the Fathers generally, and all judicious modern Writers seem to place Perfection in nothing higher than in a perpetual Progress towards it; they look upon Life as a perpetual Warfare, and utterly deny any such Height or Eminence as is raised above Clouds and Storms, above Troubles and Temptations. To this I have several Things to say: *First*, I have described the Christian's spiritual Progress in the same Manner, and, as near as I could, in the same Words which the Scripture does. *Secondly*, I do not pretend any where to assert, that there is any State in this Life raised above Trials and Temptations. *Thirdly*, As the World now goes, Perfection is a State we arrive at very late;* and all the Way to it full of Labour and Travel, full of Dangers and Difficulties; so that upon this Account, the Life of Man may well be said to be a perpetual Warfare. But, *Fourthly*, I do by no Means affirm, that the perfect Man is incapable of Improvement. Of this I shall have Occasion to unfold my Sense more fully afterwards.

* True; but it is our own Fault.



C H A P. IV.

Of the Means of Perfection.

SHOULD I insist particularly on every one of the Means or Instruments of Perfection, it would lead me through the whole System of Religion; it would oblige me to treat of all the Articles of our Faith, and all the Parts of moral Righteousness. For the Virtues of the Gospel all afford mutual Support and Nourishment to one another; and Prayer and the LORD's Supper, not to mention Meditation, Psalmody, Conversation, Discipline, consist in the Exercise of almost all Christian Graces, as Repentance, Faith, Hope, Charity: But this would be an endless Task. I purpose therefore here only to lay down some few general Observations, which may serve for Directions in the Use of Gospel-Means, point out the End we are to aim at, and enable us to reap the utmost Benefit from them.

SECT. 1. THE Practice of Wisdom and Virtue is the best Way to improve and strengthen both. The Practice of Virtue gives a Man great Boldness towards God, mingles Joy and Pleasure in all his Addresses to Him, purifies and enlightens the Mind, and entitles him to more plentiful Measures of Grace, and higher Degrees of Favour. *If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my Disciples indeed; and ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free, John viii. 31, 32. To him that hath, shall be given, and he shall have more Abundance,*

dance, Matt. xiii. 12. If this be so, as undoubtedly it is, it is plain, that we ought not to be fond of such a Solitude or Retirement as cuts off the Opportunity of many Virtues, which may be daily practised in a more publick Life. The true Hermit was at first little better than a pious Extravagant: I will not say how much worse he is now. Meditation and Prayer are excellent Duties; but Meekness, Charity, Mercy and Zeal, are not one Jot inferior to them. The World is an excellent School to a good Christian; the Follies and the Miseries, the Trials and the Temptations of it, not only exercise and employ our Virtue, but cultivate and improve it: They afford us both Instruction and Discipline, and advance us towards solid Wiidom, and a well-settled Power over ourselves.

RELIGION is not to be confined to the Church, and to the Closet, nor to be exercised only in Prayers and Sacraments, Meditations and Alms; but every where we are in the Presence of God, and every Word, every Action is capable of it. It is to the Virtues or the Errors of our common Conversation and ordinary Deportment that we owe both our Friends and Enemies, our Domestic Peace or Troubles; and in a high Degree the Improvement or Depravation of our Mind. Let no Man then, that will be perfect or happy, abandon himself to his Humours or Inclinations in his Carriage towards his Acquaintance, his Children, his Servants: Let no Man, that will be perfect or happy, follow Prejudice or Fashion in the common Actions of Life: But let him assure himself, that by a daily Endeavour to conform these more and more to the excellent Rules of the Gospel, he is to train himself to the most absolute Wisdom and perfect Virtue he is capable of.

SECT. 2. THE two great Instruments, not of Regeneration only, but also of Perfection, are the Word and the Spirit of GOD. The Gospel contains all those Truths that are necessary to the clear Exposition of our Duty, or to the moving and obliging us to the Practice of it. And the Spirit supplies that supernatural Strength that is necessary to enable us, not only to will, but to do that which is our Duty.

THIS then being unquestionable, that the Gospel and the Spirit are the two great Instruments of Perfection; we may hence infer two Rules, which are of the most universal Use in the Pursuit of Perfection.

I. WE cannot have too great a Value, too great a Passion for the Book of GOD; nor fix our Thoughts and Hearts too earnestly upon the Truths of it. We must entertain the Gospel, as that which has infallible Truth in all its Doctrines, uncontrollable Authority in all its Precepts, a Divine Certainty in all its Promises and Threats, and a Divine Wisdom in all its Counsels and Directions: And he that thus believes, what Light and Beauty will he discern in all its Descriptions of our Duty! What Force in all its Persuasions! What Majesty, what Dignity, what Life, what Power, what Consolation, what Support! In one Word, what heavenly Virtue will he discern in each Part of it, and what vast unfathomable Wisdom in the whole Composure and Contrivance of it! How will he then admire it, how will he love it, how will he study it, how will he delight in it! How will he be supported by the Promises, and awed by the Threats of it! How will he be pierced by those Exaggerations of Sin, and enamour'd by those lively Descriptions of Virtue he meets in it! How will

will he adore the Goodness of GOD, conspicuous in our Redemption! How will he be inflam'd with the Love of *Jesus*, and amazed at his Condescension and Humility! This and much more is the natural Effect of our receiving the Gospel as we ought, and pondering the Truths of it with devout and incessant Meditation. Nor will any one think I attribute too much to the Study of this Word of Life, who shall consider that it is one of the great Works of the Holy Spirit, *to incline our Hearts to the Testimonies of GOD, to write his Laws in our Hearts*, to dispose us to attend to revealed Truths; and, in one Word, to fix our Minds and Thoughts upon them.

2. SINCE the Spirit, together with the Gospel, is a joint Principle of Regeneration and Perfection, it is manifest, that we ought to live in a continual Dependence upon GOD. He must be our Hope and Confidence in the Day of Trial: He must be our Praise and Boast in the Day of Victory, and in the Day of Peace. When we lie down, and when we rise up, we must say with the Psalmist, *It is Thou, LORD, that makest me dwell in Safety*, Psalm iv. 8. We must look upon ourselves as surrounded by Enemies, and besieged by spiritual Dangers, as *David* was by temporal: And as he in the one, so must we in the other, expect Strength and Salvation from Him. *Through GOD we shall do valiantly; for He it is that shall tread down our Enemies*, Psalm lx. 12. *Many Nations compass me round about; but in the Name of the LORD I will destroy them*. And when we have conquer'd Temptations, and routed the Powers of Darkness, we must ascribe all, not to our own Strength, nor to our own Watchfulness, but to the Grace and Power of GOD.

Now,

Now, many will be the happy Effects of this Dependence upon GOD: We shall be passionately desirous of his Presence, of his Grace and Favour: We shall prepare our Souls, we shall awaken and dispose all our Faculties to receive Him: We shall ever do the Things that may invite and prevail with Him to abide with us: We shall be apprehensive of his forsaking us, as the greatest Evil that can befall us. *Lift up your Heads, O ye Gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting Doors; and the King of Glory shall come in: Awake, O my Soul, raise thyself above this World and Flesh, that thou mayst be fit for the King of Glory to dwell in thee: Who is the King of Glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in Battle; that Holy Spirit that subdues our Enemies, that strengthens us with Might, and fills us with Courage and holy Alacrity, Psalm xxiv. 7, 8. Nor does the Psalmist prepare his Soul for GOD by Meditation only, and spiritual Recollection; but by a careful Regulation of all his Actions, Psalm ci. 2, 3. I will behave myself wisely in a perfect Way: O when wilt Thou come unto me? I will walk within my House with a perfect Heart. I will set no wicked Thing before mine Eyes: I hate the Work of them that turn aside, it shall not cleave to me.*

THE Result of all this, must needs be Stedfastness and Growth in Holiness and Goodness. For, *First*, This is the natural Influence of such a Dependence upon GOD. It places us as always before Him, and makes us walk humbly and circumspectly, as becomes those that are awed by the Presence of so holy a Majesty: *I have set the LORD always before me; because He is at my Right-Hand, I shall not be moved. Secondly*, We cannot doubt but that GOD will plentifully bestow his Grace on those, who thus rely upon him. For where can He bestow

flow it with more Advantage to his Glory, or to the Propagation of Holiness; both which are so dear to him? Who is a Subject more capable of it, or who can be better entitled to it, than he who thus depends upon GOD? As he begs it humbly, and receives it thankfully; so he will husband it carefully, and employ it zealously.

SECT. 3. IN Prayer, Meditation, and other instrumental Duties of Religion, we are to aim at one or all of these three Things.

FIRST, The quickening and enlivening the Conscience.

SECONDLY, The confirming and strengthening our Resolutions of Obedience.

THIRDLY, The raising and keeping up holy and devout Affections.

GREAT is the Benefit of each of these. Tenderness of Conscience will keep us not only from Evil, but every Appearance of it: Increase of spiritual Strength, will render us stedfast and immovable in all the Works of GOD; and holy Passion will make us abound in them. To spiritual Passion we owe the Zeal and Pleasure; to spiritual Strength or Liberty, the Constancy and Uniformity of an holy Life: And both Strength and Passion are generally owing to a tender and enlightened Conscience. For while the Conscience preserves a quick and nice Sense of Good and Evil, all the great Truths of the Gospel will have their proper Force and Efficacy upon us. These then are the genuine Fruits of Meditation, the Eucharist, Prayer and Psalmody. If they do not add Life and Light to the Conscience; if they do not augment our

Strength, nor exalt our Passions; if they do not increase our Detestation of Sin, and our Love to God and Goodness; if they do not quicken and excite devout Purposes; if they do not engage and refresh the Soul by holy Joy and heavenly Pleasure; if, I say, they do not in some Degree promote these Things, we reap no Benefit at all from them.

BUT though the Ends I have mentioned be of this great Use to all, and consequently all are obliged to aim at them, yet may the different Imperfections of different Christians, render one of these Ends more necessary than another; and by Consequence, it will be Wisdom more immediately and directly to intend and pursue that. For Example: If a Man's Temper be such, that his Passions soon kindle, and soon die again; that he is apt to form wise and great Projects, and as unapt to accomplish any Thing; in this Case, it will be his Duty to aim especially at the Increase of Strength. But if on the other Hand, a Man's Temper be cold and phlegmatick, slow and heavy; it is but fit that he should particularly apply himself to the exciting devout Affections in his Soul. For as excellent Purposes often miscarry for Want of Constancy and Firmness of Mind: So Steadiness of Mind seldom effects any great Matter, when it wants Life and Passion to put it into Motion. Again, if one's past Life has been very sinful, or the present be not very fruitful, it will behove such a one to increase the Tenderness of Conscience, to add more Light and Life to its Convictions.

HAVING thus in few Words, both made out the Usefulness of those three Ends to a Christian in the Performance of instrumental Duties, and shewed in what Cases he may be obliged to aim more immediately at one than another; I will now enquire how

how these three Ends may be secured and promoted.

FIRST, *Of Tenderneſs of Conſcience, or the full and lively Convictions of it.*

To promote this, the *fiſt* Thing neceſſary, is, *Meditation.* No Man, who diligently ſearches and ſtudies the Book of GOD, can be a Stranger to himſelf, or to his Duty. Not to his Duty; for this Book reveals the whole Will of GOD in clear and full Terms: It points out the great Ends of Life ſo plainly, and conducts them by ſuch unerring Rules, that there is no Variety of Circumſtances can ſo perplex our Duty, but that an honeſt Man by the Help of this may eaſily diſcover it. For this Reaſon it is, that the Word of GOD is called Light, becauſe it diſtinguiſhes between Good and Evil, Right and Wrong; and like a Lamp maniſeſts the Path which we are to chuſe, and diſperſes that Miſt and Darkneſs, with which the Luſt of Man, and the Subtlety of Hell has covered it. Nor can he that ſtudies the Word of GOD, be a Stranger to himſelf any more than to his Duty. For this Light ranſacks all the Receſſes of the Soul; it traces all its Affections back to their fiſt Springs; it lays open all its Deſires and Projects, and ſtrips its moſt ſecret Purpoſes of all their Diſguiſe: *For the Word of GOD is quick and powerful, and ſharper than any two-edged Sword; piercing even to the dividing aſunder of Soul and Spirit, and of the Joints and Marrow; and is a Diſcerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart,* Heb. iv. 12. In a Word, If we would preſerve the Conſcience quick and ſenſible, we muſt be daily converſant in the Book of GOD. For this commands with that Authority, inſtructs with that Clearneſs, perſuades with that Force, reproves with that Purity, Prudence, and

Charity, that we shall not easily be able to resist it. It describes Righteousness and Sin in such true and lively Colours, proclaims Rewards and Punishments in such powerful and moving Language, that it rouses even the Dead in Sin, penetrates and wounds the Stupid and Obdurate.

To Meditation we must add Prayer. For this is a proper and essential Means to renew in the Soul, the Hatred of Sin, and Love of Goodness; and to improve those Impressions which Meditation has made upon it. We cannot easily put up Petitions to God with Confidence, unless we do the Things that please him; for our Hearts will misgive us, and our very Petitions will reproach us: And the mere Thought of entering more immediately into the Presence of God, obliges us to a more careful Examination of our Actions.

BUT this is not all; we are to pray, that God would enable us to search out and discover our own Hearts. *Psalms cxxxix. 23, 24. Search me, O God, and know my Heart: Try me, and know my Thoughts; and see if there be any wicked Way in me, and lead me in the Way everlasting.* And if we do this sincerely, God will undoubtedly grant our Requests; and will lay open to us all our present Defects, and shew us how far short we come of the Glory of God; that Perfection of Holiness and Happiness, which many eminent Saints actually arrived at upon Earth. And we may be sure, that Light which breaks in upon our Mind with this Brightness, will not suffer any latent Corruptions to continue undiscovered; nor permit us to forget the Stains and Ruins, which the Sins of our past Life have left behind them.

CONVERSATION is another Way, by which we must learn to know ourselves, and by which Conscience is kept awake, and in its Vigour. How convictive, how moving is the Discourse of a devout and pious Friend? When he complains, or when he rejoices; when he relates the History of his own Experience; when he lets us see the Designs he has formed, and the Ends his Soul thirsts after; how does our Heart burn within us? What Variety of Affections does it raise in us, when he makes his Remarks on human Nature and the World; when he bewails the Dishonour of God and the Decay of Religion amongst us; when he relates the Misery of Sinners, and observes the particular Sins and Follies that occasion it? How often does he hereby provoke us to wise Reflections on ourselves? How many new Beauties does he discover to us in Virtue? How many Deformities in Sin, which had escaped our Observations? But it is not the Conversation only of my Friend, but his Life also, from which I derive Instruction and Admonition. The Perfections of my Friend, are the gentlest and the mildest, and yet the most awakening Reproofs too of my own Defects; and by the Freshness and Lustre of his Virtue, I discern best the Weakness and the Dimness of my own. How often have I been moved to turn my Thoughts with some Indignation on my own Heats and Commotions, while I have admired and blest the Sweetness and the Gentleness, the Softness and the Calm, very conspicuous in an excellent Friend? And when I have heard another mention his nightly Praises, and those Divine Thoughts which filled the Intervals of his Sleep, and made those Hours that are so burthensome to some, the most entertaining and delightful Parts of his Rest, how have I been inwardly filled with Confusion and Shame? How have I upbraided and reproached myself, con-

demned the Sluggishness of my Days, the Dullness and the Wandrings of my Soul by Night? And I believe every sincere Man must find himself thus affected on the like Occasions. For in this Kind of Reproof, there is something more of Force and Authority, than is to be found in any other: For the Example of Friends, does not only teach us what we are to do, but demonstrates also that it may be done. Nor does Virtue any where appear with so lovely and charming an Air as in a Friend.

BUT after all, among all the Benefits we gain by excellent Friendships, we ought not to reckon this as the least, that it is one, and that an indispensable Office of Friendship, to admonish and reprove: *For the Reproofs of Instruction are the Paths of Life*, Prov. vi. 23. But then, that we may be capable of this Blessing, we must dispose our Minds to expect and bear Reproof: We must strive after an humble and teachable Temper; and we must invite and encourage our Friends to this kindest Office; not only by unaffected Request, but also by obeying their Advice, pardoning whatever Infirmary may be interspersed with it, and loving them the better, as indeed they deserve: For there is scarce any better Proof of their Affection, Prudence and Courage, which they are capable of giving us.

SECONDLY, *A second End of instrumental Duties, is, the Increase of spiritual Strength.*

NOW spiritual Strength consists in the Dominion we have over our Affections and Actions: And it stands upon two Bases; the Reduction of Sin, and Growth of Virtue. Whatever weakens our Propensions to Sin, whatever promotes the Subjection of the Body, adds Power and Authority to the Mind,

Mind, and renders Virtue more easy and pleasant. And because Virtues have a mutual Connexion and Dependence, therefore whatever promotes any, promotes all: But especially, whatever strengthens our Hope or Fear; or enlarges our Knowledge, and increases our Faith, confirms and establishes our Resolution more than any Thing else. Faith is the Root, Fear the Guard, and Hope the Spur of all our Virtues. Faith convinces us what is our Duty; Fear makes us impartial, diligent, and watchful; Hope, resolved and active in the Prosecution of it.

It being thus clear, what our spiritual Strength consists in, it will be easy to discern by what Means we are to gain it. But I can here only suggest those Hints, which the Reader must upon Occasion, as he needs, enlarge and improve.

I. MEDITATION is the first Thing necessary. We must often survey the Grounds of our Faith; we must consider frequently and seriously the Scripture Topicks of Hope and Fear, such are the Death of *Jesus*, a Judgment to come, the Holiness, and Justice, and the Omnipresence of God: We must diligently observe the Wiles of *Satan*, the Arts and Insinuations of the World and the Flesh, and mark the Progress of Sin from its very Beginning to Maturity; and all this with a particular Regard to the Corruptions of our own Nature, and the Deceitfulness of our own Hearts: We must often ponder the Beauty and Peace of Holiness, the Love of God and of *Jesus*, the Virtues, Sufferings, and Crowns of Martyrs. And, finally, If we will increase in Strength, we must practise this Duty of Meditation often, and not suffer ourselves to be withdrawn from it, or be prevailed with to intermit it on any trivial Pretences.

BUT

BUT we must not only take Care that Meditation be frequent, but also that it be not loose and roving. To which End it will be necessary to study ourselves as well as the Scriptures, and to be intimately acquainted with the Advantages and Disadvantages of our Constitution, and our State; that so in our Meditations on the Scriptures, we may more particularly have an Eye to those Vices we are most obnoxious to, and those Virtues which are either more necessary, or more feeble and undergrown.

AFTER Meditation must follow Prayer. Great is the Power of Prayer, in promoting Christian Strength and Fortitude; whether we consider its Prevalence upon GOD, or its Influence upon ourselves. If we consider the latter, what Divine Force and Energy is there in the Confidence of Faith, the Joys of Hope, the earnest Longings and Desires of Love, the tender Sorrows of Contrition, the Delight of Praises and Thanksgivings, the Adorations of a profound Humility, and the Resolutions and Vows of a perfect Abhorrence of, and holy Zeal and Indignation against Sin! How do these Things mellow and enrich the Soul! How do they raise it higher and higher above *the Corruption which is in the World through Lust!* How do they renew it daily, and make it *Partaker of the Divine Nature!* How naturally then must Prayer fortify the Mind, ripen good Dispositions, or add Strength and Perfection to good Habits! Since it is nothing else but a repeated Exercise of almost all the Graces of the Gospel, Repentance, Faith, Hope, Charity.

IF, *secondly*, we enquire into the Prevalence of Prayer with GOD, we shall have further Reasons to resolve, that it is a most effectual Means of increasing

creasing our spiritual Strength. What will God deny to the Prayer of a righteous Man? He may deny him temporal Things, because they are not good for him: He may refuse to remove a Temptation, because this is often an Occasion of his own Glory, and his Servant's Reward: But He will never refuse him Grace to conquer it. He will no more deny his Spirit to one that earnestly and sincerely begs it, than the natural Parent will Bread to his hungry and craving Child. And no Wonder, since Grace is as necessary to the spiritual Life, as Bread to the natural: The Goodness of God is more tender and compassionate than any Instinct in human Nature; and the Purity and Perfection of God more zealously solicitous for the Holiness and Immortality of his Children, than earthly Parents can be for the sickly perishing Life of theirs.

Thus then it is plain, that Prayer contributes wonderfully to the strengthening and establishing the Mind of Man in Goodness. But then we must have these two Qualifications; it must be frequent, and incessantly importunate.

1. It must be frequent. I would have this Rule complied with as far as it may, even in our stated, regular, and solemn Addresses to God.

2. PRAYER must be incessantly importunate. Importunate it will be, if the Soul be disposed as it ought; that is, if it be disengaged from the World, and possessed entirely with the earnest Expectation of a better; if it be humbled in itself, disclaim all Strength and Merit of its own, and rest wholly on the Goodness and All-sufficiency of God. I add incessantly, in Conformity to the Parables of our Lord, *Luke xi. 8.* and *xviii. 5.* and the Command
of

of the Apostle, *1 Theſſ. v. 17.* And whoever considers human Nature well, and remembers how soon pious Motions vanish, and how little they effect, will discern a plain Reason, both for Vehemence and Perseverance in Prayer: For Vehemence, that the Soul may be deeply impressed by pious Passions: For Perseverance, that such Impressions may not be effaced. Nor let any one fancy, that Prayer thus qualified has not a better Influence upon God, as well as upon ourselves. It is true, God is void of the Defects of human Passions, but not of the Perfection of Divine Ones. Woe were to us, if God were an inflexible, inexorable Deity, and incapable of being wrought upon by the incessant Importunity of his poor Creatures: Woe were to us, if the Softness and the Tenderness of the Divine Nature, did not infinitely exceed the little Resemblances of it in Man; if, in a Word, God did not abound in Goodness, and Mercy, and Compassion, more easily to be moved, than those human Passions that bear some Analogy to them.

NEXT to Conversation with God by Prayer, the Conversation of good Men wonderfully contributes to the building us up in Faith and Virtue. How does the Sense and Experience of such as deserve our Esteem and Affection, establish our Judgment when they concur with us? How does their Knowledge enlighten us, and their Example inflame us? A pious Friendship renders Religion itself more engaging: It minds us when we are forgetful, supports us when we faint, and recalls us into the right Path when we go out of it. This is the Business of Conversation, the End of Friendship. We should be often talking together of the Things of God, communicating and laying open the State of our Souls, our Fears, our Hopes, our Improve-

Improvements and Defects. We should watch over one another, comfort and support one another; our Discourse should always minister new Warmth, or new Strength, to our holy Faith and Love.

BUT among all the Means of Grace, there is no one does so much corroborate and nourish the Soul of Man, as the Holy Eucharist. How many wise and impartial Reflections does the Preparation for it occasion? What unfeigned Humility, and what a profound Awe of the Divine Majesty, does a previous Self-Examination beget in us? What a tender Sense of the Divine Love does the Contemplation of the whole Mystery inkindle? What Firmness do we derive from repeated Engagements; and these offer'd up with so much Solemnity? And how much, finally, is the Habit of Holiness improved by that spiritual Pleasure, which the sensible Assurances of Grace and Salvation work in us, by that Awe and holy Fear which the whole Action leaves behind on our Minds, and the Zeal, Vigilance and Circumspection it obliges us to for the Time following? Not to mention here, how the Participation of this Holy Sacrament obliges us to a most solemn Exercise of Repentance towards GOD, and Faith in our LORD *Jesus Christ*, of Brotherly Love, and the Hope of Immortality. Here, in a Word, we prepare to meet GOD, as we would do in Death and Judgment: Here we make an open Profession of our holy Faith, renounce the World and Flesh, all our sinful or vain Desires, devote ourselves to the Service of *Jesus*, and learn to expect Happiness from nothing else, but the Merits and Imitation of his Cross. So profound is the Wisdom of this Institution, that it evidently speaks GOD the Author of it, and proclaims the too common Neglect of it in most Parts of this Nation, an inexcusable Sin and Folly.

THIRDLY,

THIRDLY, *A third End of instrumental Duties, is, the raising and keeping up holy and devout Affections.*

I KNOW not why Passion is so commonly undervalued and disparaged in Religion, unless they who thus treat it, mean nothing by it, but a short-liv'd and superficial Commotion of the Mind, which leaves no Print or Relish behind it, and is presently succeeded by Sin and Folly. Holy Passion is the Vigour and Strength of the Soul; it is the State of the Mind when it is thoroughly moved and affected. And therefore to form to one's self Religion destitute of Passion, is little better than to content one's self with one that is lazy, lukewarm, and lifeless. And though there be some Tempers very unapt to be moved, yet it is hard to imagine how even these can be wrought up to a Resolution, or that Resolution be supported and continued without their being affected so thoroughly, as to feel either a real Passion, or something very nearly approaching one.

IT is an excellent Frame of Spirit, when the Soul is easily elevated and transported into holy Passion: And all those Virtues, or rather Acts of Virtue, which are described to the Life, and which are by all judged most perfect and lovely, have most of Passion in them. How warm and passionate was the Love of *David* for his GOD! What Flame, what Vehemence of Desire was he moved by, when he cries out, *Psalms* xlii, 1, 2. *As the Hart panteth after the Water-Brooks, so panteth my Soul after Thee, O GOD: My Soul thirsteth for GOD, for the living GOD!* What awful Concussions and Agitations of Spirit did he feel, when he thus describes his Fear, *My Flesh trembleth for Fear of Thee, and I am afraid of thy Judgments, Psalm* cxix. 120!

What

What Tenderness of Heart do we meet with in the Repentance of *St. Peter*, when *he went forth and wept bitterly!* Of *Mary Magdalen*, when *she washed the Feet of our Saviour with her Tears, and wiped them with the Hairs of her Head!* Nor were the Pleasures of Assurance more vehement than the Sorrows of Repentance, when the *first Christians rejoiced with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory.* I wish with all my Heart, that all these excellent Affections of Soul, could be render'd natural and habitual. The nearer we come to this, undoubtedly the perfecter. The more frequent as well as the more vehement and fervent such Affections are, the better certainly; for great is the Force of holy Passion. The Flame of Love refines our Nature, and purifies it from all its Dross. The Tears of godly Sorrow extinguish all our carnal and worldly Lusts; and the Agitation of Fear preserve the Chastity and Purity of the Soul. It is plain then, that our Religion ought to be animated by holy Passions; that the more frequent and natural these grow, the more perfect we are; that being the most excellent Frame of Spirit, when we are most thoroughly affected by divine Truths. By what Means we may attain to this, is now briefly to be considered.

It is for Want of close and particular Applications, when divine Truths do not move us. This now does not only call us to the frequent Meditation of the most affecting Subjects, the Majesty and Omnipresence of God; the Sufferings of *Christ*, Death and Judgment, Heaven and Hell; but it shews also, how to model and form our Meditations, that they prove not cold and sluggish. Let the Object of our Thoughts be described by the most sensible Images or Resemblances, let it be

made as particular as it can, by fixing its Eye upon us, and pointing its Motion towards us. Prayer is an Exercise very apt to move the Passion: The Mind having disengaged itself from all earthly Affections, is prepared for the Impression of Truth and the Spirit of GOD. It draws nearer to the Presence of GOD, and the Sense of this sheds an awful Reverence upon it. It has a clearer, calmer, and more serious View of Divine Things, than when it is obscured and disturbed by worldly Objects. In a Word, Meditation is in this Exercise render'd more solemn and more particular; and when the holy Fire is kindled in the Soul, it dilates and diffuses itself more and more, 'till the Strength of Desire, the Vehemence of holy Love transcending the Weakness of this mortal Nature, we faint under the Passions that we cannot bear.

THE LORD's Supper is an holy Rite, wonderfully adapted to raise excellent Passions: Here *Christ* is, as it were set forth crucified amongst us; we see his Body broken, and his Blood poured forth. Here with a devout Joy we receive and embrace him by Faith and Love in those Symbols of his Body and Blood, and Pledges of his Love. The Soul must be very ill prepared, it must have very imperfect Notions of Sin and Damnation, the Cross of *Christ*, Grace and Salvation, which is not sensible of a Croud of holy Passions springing up in it at this Sacrament. Hymns and Psalms have, a peculiar Force and Operation upon a pious Mind. Divine Poetry has a noble Elevation of Thoughts; it does not devise and counterfeit Passions, but only vents those that it feels; and these are pure and lovely, kindled from above. Therefore are all its Characters natural, its Description lively, its Language moving and powerful; and all

is so directly suited to a devout Mind, that it presently enters, moves, and actuates it, inspires and informs it with the very Passions it describes. And though all good Men are not equally moved in this Duty, yet all, I believe, are more or less moved. It was very much the Business of the Prophets, and all of Prophetick Education. Our LORD and his Disciples practised it frequently. It was ever a great Part of religious Joy, and one of the greatest Pleasures of pious Retirement: And I wish from my Heart the Esteem of it were revived in our Days; I persuade myself it would add much to the Warmth and Pleasure of Devotion. And would introduce Religion into our Families.

AND this minds me, that as I have under every Head taken Notice of the Advantages of Conversation, so I should not forget it here. This has a lively Influence upon our Minds, and always kindles in the Soul a gentle Heat. And did we but accustom ourselves to entertain one another with Discourse about another World; did we mingle the Praises of GOD with the Feasts and Joys of Life; did we retire to our Country-Houses to contemplate the Variety and Riches of divine Wisdom and Bounty in those natural Scenes of Pleasure which the Country affords, and did we now and then invite our Friends to join with us in offering up Hallelujahs to GOD on this Account, what Brightness and Serenity, what Calm and Pleasure, would this diffuse through all our Souls, through all our Days! To this that I have said touching the exciting holy Passions, I will only add one Observation, formed upon those Words of the Apostle, *James v. 13. Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing Psalms.* That Religion must be accommodated to Nature, and that devout Passions will soon

shoot up, when they are engrafted upon a natural Stock. With which I will join this other, That since we are most affected by such Truths as are most particular, circumstantiated, and sensible, and therefore imprint themselves more easily and deeply on our Imagination; for this Reason I should recommend the Reading the Lives of Saints and excellent Persons, were they not generally writ so, that we have Reason to desire somewhat more of the Spirit of Piety in the Learned, and more of Judgment in the Pious, who have employ'd their Pens on this Argument.

4. THE immediate Ends of Discipline are, the subduing the Pride of the Heart, and the reducing the Appetites of the Body. By Discipline, I understand whatever voluntary Rigours we impose upon ourselves, or whatever voluntary Restraints we lay upon our allowed Enjoyments. And when I say that the Humiliation of the Heart, and Subjection of the Body are the immediate Ends of both, I do not exclude any other which may be involved in these, or result from them. Now, of what Importance these two Things are, I need not shew. For since all Sin is distinguished in Scripture into the Filthiness of the Spirit and the Flesh, it is plain, that the Pride of the Heart, and the Lust of the Body, are the two great Causes of all Immorality. And therefore these are the two great Ends which the Wise and Good have ever had in their Eye in all their Acts of Self-denial and Mortification. This is sufficiently attested by the Example of David, Psalm cxxxi. 1, 2, 3, *LORD I am not high-minded, I have no proud Looks I do not exercise myself in great Matters, which are too high for me: But I refrain my Soul, and keep it low, like as a Child that is weaned from his Mother; yea, my Soul is even as a weaned Child.* Whoever thus mortifies

tifies the Pride of the Heart, whoever thus brings under the Body, will soon find himself truly set free, * and Master of himself: He will be able to run the the Way of God's Commandments, and to advance on swiftly towards Perfection, and the Pleasure and Happiness that attend it.

AND to attain these blessed Ends, we need not ensnare our Souls in the perpetual Bonds of monastick Vows, we need not expose ourselves by any ridiculous or fantastick Observances. There is I say, no Need of this; for we may, as oft as we shall see fit, retrench our Pleasures, abate of the Shew and Figure of Life. We may renounce our own Wills to comply with theirs who cannot so well pretend either to Authority or Discretion. And if these Things cannot be done in some Circumstances, without becoming Fools for *Christ*; that is, without that Tameness, that Condescension, that Diminution of ourselves which will comport with the Humours and the Fashions of the World; here is still the more Room for Mortification, and for a nearer and more eminent Imitation of the blessed JESUS: Provided still we decline all Affectation of Singularity; and when we practise any extraordinary Instance of Self-denial, we be ever able to justify it to religious and judicious Persons, by the Proposal of some excellent End. Fasting indeed is plainly described in Scripture; and though the Obligation to it, with respect to its Frequency and Measure, be not the same on all, yet all should some Time or other practise it, as far as the Rules of Christian Prudence will permit. And I have often thought, that Fasting should generally consist, rather in Abstinence

* After he has Living Faith, not before.

from pleasing Meats, than from all; not the Food which nourishes our Strength, but that which gratifies the Palate, ministring most directly to Wantonness and Luxury.

FOR the better regulating of Voluntary Discipline, I propose by Way of Advice Three Things.

1. I do not think it best to bring ourselves under any perpetual and unalterable Ties in any Instance of Self-denial: There is a Virtue in enjoying the World, as well as in renouncing it; and it is as great an Excellence of Religion to know how to abound, as how to suffer Want. Nay, what is more, all voluntary Austerities are in order to give us a Power over ourselves in the general Course of Life. And lastly, I very much doubt, when once a Man has long and constantly accustomed himself to any Rigour, whether it continue to have much of Mortification in it, or whether it so effectually tend to promote our spiritual Liberty, as it would if we did return to it but now and then, as we saw Occasion.

2. WE must not multiply unnecessary Severities; and that no Man may think more needful than really are, I observe here, that as there are very few who have not in their Nature very considerable Infirmities, so are there as few who have not in their Fortune very considerable Inconveniences: And if they would apply themselves to the Mastering of both these as they ought, they would stand in less Need of the Discipline of arbitrary Austerities. There are many Things too trifling to be taken Notice of, which yet prove sufficient to disturb the Quiet of most, and betray them to many Passions and Indecencies. Nay, the Weaknesses of good Men are sometimes sed by Temptations

tations, of very little Moment. Now, to surmount these Temptations, and to frame and accommodate the Mind to bear the little Shocks and Jostles which we daily meet with, without any Discomposure or Displeasure, is a Matter of great Use to the Tranquility of Life, and the Maturity of Virtue. To be able to bear the Pride of one, and the Stupidity of another; one while to encounter Rudeness, another while Neglect, without being moved by either; to submit to Noise, disorder, and the Distraction of many little Affairs, when one is naturally a lover of Quietness and Order, or when the Mind is intent upon Things of Importance; in a Word, to digest the perpetual Disappointments which we meet with, both in Business and in the little Projects, which People of all Stations and all Capacities pursue; to suffer all the Humours and Follies, the Errors, Artifices, Indelicacies, and Faults of those we have to do with, with that Temper we ought, that is, with a Calmness which proceeds not from an Unconcern for the Good of others, but a just Dominion over our own Spirits: This is a great Height; and to train ourselves up to it daily with much Patience, Vigilance, and Application of Mind, is the best Discipline. Though I do not mean hereby to exclude all voluntary Impositions; for in order to master the Evils which we cannot avoid, it may be of good Use now and then to form the Mind by voluntary Trials and Difficulties of our own choosing.

3. WE must ever have a Care not to lose the Substance for the Shadow, not to rest in the Means, and neglect the End; being much taken up in Discipline, without producing any Fruit of it. For this is taking much Pains to little Purpose; travelling much without making any Progress. But
much

much more must we take Care in the next Place, that the Discipline we put ourselves upon, do not produce any ill Fruit. To which end, we must carefully observe Three Things.

1. THAT we keep to that Moderation which spiritual Prudence requires; neither exposing nor entangling ourselves, nor discouraging others by Excesses and Extravagancies.

2. THAT our Self-denial never betray us into Pride or Uncharitableness; for if it tempt us to over-rate ourselves, and dispise others, this is a flat Contradiction to one of the main Ends of Christian Discipline, which is, the Humiliation of the Heart.

3. THAT we ever preserve, nay, encrease the Sweetness and Gentleness of our Minds; for whatever makes us sour and morose, or peevish and unfociable, makes us certainly so much worse: And instead of begetting in us nearer Resemblances of the Divine Nature, gives us a very strong Tincture of a Devilish one. There is indeed but little Reason, why the Look should be louring, when the Heart is filled with Joy and Goodness. A serene open Countenance, and a chearful grave Deportment, does best suit the Tranquility, Purity, and Dignity of a Christian Mind.

5. *Lastly*, SINCE Meditation, Prayer, and holy Conversation are so necessary to quicken the Conscience, excite our Passions, and fortify our Resolutions, it is as necessary so to model and form our Lives, that we may have Time enough to bestow on these. For they, whose Minds and Time are taken up by the World, have very little Leisure for Things of this Nature, and are very little disposed

posed to them, and as ill qualified for them. As to Conversation, as the World goes now, it is not to be expected that it should have in it any Relish of Piety, unless between such as have enter'd into a close and strict Friendship. But the worldly Man is a Stranger to true Friendship; it is too sacred, too delicate a Thing for a Mind devoted to the World, to be capable of. A Regard to Interest, to some outward Forms and Decencies; or the Gratification of some natural Inclination, may invite him to more Familiarity with some, than others. But it is hard to believe, that there should be any Thing in such Combinations, of that which is the very Life and Soul of Friendship, a sincere and undesigning Passion, increased by mutual Confidences and Obligations, and supported and strengthen'd by Virtue and Honour. As to Prayer, Men of Business do, I doubt, oftner read or say Prayers, than pray; for it is very hard to imagine that a Soul that grovels perpetually upon Earth, that is incessantly solicitous about the Things of this World, and that enters abruptly upon this Duty without any Preparation, should immediately take Fire, be filled with heavenly Vigour, and transported with earnest and impatient Desire of Grace and Glory.

AH! how hard it is for him who hungers and thirsts after the Profits of this World, to *hunger and thirst after Righteousness*. And *Lastly*, as to Meditation, how can it be imagined that those whose Minds and Bodies are fatigued and harassed by worldly Business, should be much inclined to it, or well prepared for it? How should these Men form any Notion of exalted Virtue, of devout and heavenly Passion? What Conceptions can they have of the Power and Joy of the Holy Ghost, of Poverty of Spirit, or Purity of Heart, or the Diffusion

fusion of the Love of GOD in our Souls? What Ideas can they entertain of Heaven, or of Angelical Pleasure and Beatitude? In a Word, the Religion of Men intent upon this World, when they pretend to any, which too often they do not, consists especially in Two Things, in abstaining from Wickedness, and doing the Works of their civil Calling; and how far they may be sensible of higher Obligations, I determine not. Good GOD! What a Mercy it is to these poor Creatures, that it is the Fashion of their Country, to dedicate one Day in Seven to the Service of GOD and their Souls! But have I not often taught, that Purity of Intention converts the Works of a secular Calling into the Works of GOD? I have so, it is the Doctrine of the Gospel; but ah! How hard a Thing is it for a worldly Man to maintain this Purity of Intention! How hard a Thing is it for a Mind eaten up by the Love and Cares of this World to do all to the Honour of GOD! Let no Man therefore that desires to be Saved, take Sanctuary in Purity of Intention, while he suffers the Works of his secular Calling to ingross his Soul, and entirely usurp his Time. If secular Works thrust out such as are properly religious, it will not be easy to conceive, how the Power of Godliness should be maintained, how any wise Thoughts, or heavenly Desires should be preserved in such Men; or how, finally, those who have utterly given up themselves to the Wisdom of this World, should retain any true Value for those Maxims of the Gospel, wherein consists the true Wisdom that is from Above.

6 JY 64

The End of the Fortieth VOLUME.

☞ This Treatise being too long to be contain'd in this Volume, we refer our Readers to the Beginning of the next for the Remainder.



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FORTIETH VOLUME.



An Extraet from an Enquiry after Happinefs.
By Richard Lucas, D. D. *In Three Parts.*

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